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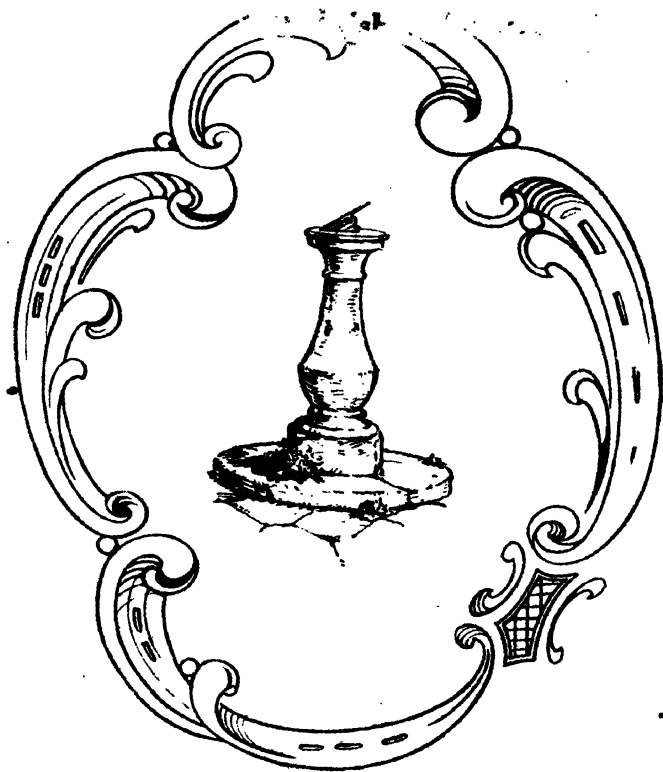
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MARGERY, 1911

College Row, Cambridge,

"MARGERY"

THE MEDIUM

BY

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Research Officer, American Society for Psychical Research
Former Managing Editor, Scientific American



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PREFACE

ON general principles I am opposed to a preface. When the function of the preface is not openly and admittedly to apologize for the shortcomings of the text, its aim is usually to tell the reader what the book is about; and in the latter instance the confession of weakness is there, implicitly, in the author's evident fear that the reader will not know, after finishing the volume, what it *was* about. But sometimes there is a legitimate purpose for a preface—sometimes the author has something to say to the reader which would be out of place in any other place than this one. The present preface, I hope, is justified in this way and to this extent.

The fact is, this book is addressed to several different groups of readers. It will, I hope, be read with interest by many persons who are already satisfied that phenomena of the sort herein described occur, and that they are due to the action of the spirits of the departed; the Spiritualist, I should think, would find it well worth while examining the details of a mediumship which has attracted such wide attention. It will likewise be read, if it justifies my expectations, by many people who either are wholly satisfied that the physical phenomena of the seance room occur, or are in incipient conviction a little beyond the state of mind which we designate as "open"; but who either are not satisfied that the spirit explanation is the valid one, or *are* satisfied that it is *not*. And it will, I trust, be read by persons who are open-minded, skeptical, or even hostile, to the occurrence of the phenomena.

• Of these several groups, some persons will find that their interest carries them along with the topical treatment and the historical development of the case which I have given. Such readers will start the book at the beginning and pursue it, I trust to the end. But others will concentrate their attention

upon the abstract question of validity, hoping either to come to agreement with me, or to come to disagreement with me, or to reach a conclusion which they would define in advance only by the hope that it shall accord with the facts. To such readers it were idle to dissemble the fact that the first twenty or more chapters, taken by themselves, make no contribution toward the demonstration of validity. I therefore urge all readers whose primary interest lies in such demonstration to read the book backwards, in so far as this is found possible.

The first four chapters, I should think, every reader would examine first; so much should not repel the skeptic, and so much is necessary to any decent understanding of what follows. After this, I believe it will be found feasible to turn to the end of the volume and work backwards, with such few references to early chapters as may be suggested by the text itself—from Chapter LII to Chapters XLVII and XXXVI, for example. Or, as a less drastic means of getting into immediate contact with the critical question of genuineness, Chapter LIV might well be used as an index and guide for pursuit of the episodes that tend to support the mediumship. I have been obliged to arrange the material in the historical order, because in this arrangement I visualize the largest permanent value; but it is clear to me that if the person whose frame of mind is more or less skeptical reads the book in that order, he will in many instances give it up in impatience before he gets to the parts *which he would find impressive*.

Here and there will be found references to Chapters LIII and LIV which are not supported by the text of these chapters. It was the original intent to insert after Chapter LII certain material bearing upon the subjective side of the mediumship—sayings and doings of the Walter personality and of other controls, which will be of ultimate importance in answering the question of the true nature of these personalities. It turns out, however, that there is more of this material than I had realized, and that it will best be with-

held from this volume in anticipation of a more complete discussion, by myself or somebody else, in another place, of this phase of the mediumship. I am fortified here by the fact that to attempt the inclusion of this material would be to violate seriously the logical climax to which the present arrangement of my chapters has made it possible to bring my discussion of the physical aspect of the case. The earlier chapters were completely set up before the later ones were realigned in accordance with this changed plan; hence it has been impossible to eliminate these invalid references.

The above paragraphs rather give the lie to my opening suggestion that this preface was to be different from other prefaces; it has, so far, been after all merely a series of explanations for the more obviously questionable features of the text. One feature which would not be obviously questionable save to one who follows the newspapers very closely remains to be mentioned. The text of Chapter L was the last part of the book to be prepared. It was written at a time when fresh developments were coming almost daily; it was rewritten several times to keep up with these. There must come a date beyond which the mechanical details of publication forbid that it be again altered. Statements by individual committee members made after that dead-line date have slightly changed the situation existing as between the committee and Margery, but I am uncertain just how much change would be required in Chapter L if I were writing it now. In any event, the future history of the case will be followed in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychological Research*. The phenomena obtained during Dingwall's examination of the mediumship in January and February, 1925, are of such character as to suggest most strongly that in the course of time we shall have sufficient facts, sufficiently different from those here reported, to call for another book. Unless and until this occurs, the files of the *Journal* above named will continue to present, in conjunction with the pres-

ent volume, a complete record of the Margery case, in and out of the seance room.

My text of the ensuing five-hundred-odd pages makes it abundantly plain to any discerning reader that this volume is prepared with the very active aid of Dr. Crandon. Without the documentary records which I have had from him and which I could have had from no other source, no adequate account of the mediumship would have been possible. To him, likewise, I am indebted for all the photographs used, since it has always been understood that all seance-room pictures are his property. I need hardly acknowledge his kindness in putting this material at my disposal; once my willingness to undertake the present volume was made plain to him, it has been to his obvious and necessary advantage to do all he could to make the book complete. But I am strongly minded to acknowledge with extreme gratitude the complete freedom from pressure under which the book has been written. Dr. Crandon believes that his wife's mediumship demonstrates the spirit hypothesis and I do not see it so; he believes that the Walter voice is proved to be always independent and I do not see it so; on numerous other points of more or less importance he and I disagree. He is always eager to argue with me on these points, in the hope of bringing me to his way of thinking; but at no time has there been the slightest suggestion that the book ought to reflect his viewpoints more and mine less. I do not believe, if our positions had been reversed, that I could have kept my hands off as consistently as he has done; and I want publicly to compliment him, and to thank him, for his extraordinary success in leaving to me the writing of my book about his wife! »

THE AUTHOR.

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PART I
PRELIMINARIES

MARGERY"

THE MEDIUM

CHAPTER I

PSYCHIC RESEARCH — WHAT IT MEANS

FROM time to time in the past, science has found itself confronted by new facts and new phenomena, which did not fit into the existing structure of knowledge and theory. In this situation, science has usually found it easier to damn the facts than to rebuild the structure for their accommodation. Cases in point are the experience of Galileo with his new facts about the heavens; the ultimate defeat of science in its century-long battle against the "popular superstition" that stones fall from the skies; the ridicule which met Roentgen's claim that he could see through opaque objects. Ultimately, of course, if a fact is a fact it finds its place; but it often has a long period of disrepute and probation.

Science is today confronted by a series of facts for which it has as yet been able to make no place. Science would do well to remember the dictum of William James that when there has been dispute between science and mysticism, mysticism has usually been right about the facts and science about their interpretation. But science has been running true to form by rejecting the facts, without attempt at explanation or interpretation.

I refer, of course, to the phenomena of the seance room. In the presence of certain exceptionally constituted persons known as mediums, things occur which, if not wholly due to

mediumistic fraud and observational error and the operation of the laws of chance, point to the working of a cause or of causes which we have yet to identify.

Of these phenomena, one group is wholly physical in character. Objects move, sounds and lights are produced, cold air-currents are felt, thermometers fall, touches are sensed by those present—all without apparent physical means. A second major group is found in the manifestations to which Richet has applied the generic name "cryptesthesia." These take widely different external forms of which telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, premonitions, prophetic dreams, automatic writing and trance voice are perhaps fairly representative; but their common denominator is always identifiable—possession and delivery, by the medium, of information which he could not get through normal use of his normal senses.

Now one of the aims of science is to couple every fact with its explanation; and it is to this rather than to any of his other duties that the layman holds the scientist most strictly. Nevertheless, it is far from novel for science to find itself obliged to accept facts, in the absence of an explanation but in the hope of being ultimately able to supply one; to say: "It occurs, but we do not yet know how or why." The confession is not one of weakness; clear-headed isolation of the question of occurrence from that of cause is a mark of competent scientific thought. Indeed, if we must have the explanation with the fact, we shall have to deny the existence of the universe, of life, of human personality; for of these, nobody knows the how or the why!

With this in mind, forty years ago Sidgwick characterized it as one of the scandals of research that the bare facts of the seance room should still be questioned. The scandal has abated little since the eighties. In this one field, science itself is prone to become unscientific, to the extent of failing to isolate the question of occurrence from that of cause. Science may be forgiven the error, for it is easier to make it in this

field than in any other. Parallel with and part of the phenomena as they occur there runs the claim of causation by the spirits of the dead. It is difficult to unravel the phenomena themselves from this claim, difficult even at times to perceive that two different things are involved whose unravelling is called for. The phenomena explain themselves, while they are occurring, by this theory which grows out of faith and emotion, and which contradicts much of orthodox religion on the one hand and much of orthodox science on the other. The facts and the explanation, both new and both incredible, one of them repugnant to most of our preconceived notions, are presented to us done up in a single package that bears the label "Spiritualism." The combination is too much for most of us and is rejected, without our realizing that we should look under the label.

Now it is conceivable that the facts and the explanation (however unwelcome the latter) are both valid, and that so much of science and religion as is *really* irreconcilable with them must go. To deny this abstract possibility were unscientific and prejudiced. Or the facts may be valid and the explanation not. In either case—in any case—we ought to ask and answer the two independent questions independently. Does a certain phenomenon occur? If so, we must then, *and only then*, consider the problem of its cause.

Intellectually I am interested in knowing why tables levitate and why clairvoyance is. Scientifically I am in no least degree interested in these questions until it has been universally agreed that the phenomena occur. Assuming their occurrence to have been proved, of course the ultimate problem is to explain them. This may well turn out to be a matter of surpassing difficulty. But if one attack it today, one meets a difficulty purely artificial and in no sense inherent in the problem. The attempt at explanation is met by the scornful statement that these things do not happen, that only a credulous fool would for a moment imagine that they do. One can-

not profitably attack the question of cause while the issue is at all times subject to such befogging.

The first thing to do in clearing away this fog is to escape from superstition. The idea that superstition plays a part in the *denial* of psychic phenomena may be a new one—the shoe is usually fitted to the other foot. But on what specific grounds is the occurrence, say, of levitation denied? I know no other answer than the claim that science denies the possibility of moving material objects without material contact. And this answer is doubly wrong.

In the first place, if science knew no way of moving material objects without contact, it would say simply and precisely this; it would not deny that such means exists. In the second place, science today knows at least three ways of moving objects without touching them. Certain objects will move without contact if exposed, under appropriate conditions, to an electric or to a magnetic field; and any object whatever will move without contact, if exposed under any conditions whatever to a gravitational field. It actually requires contact to keep it from moving!

No; the categorical negative is risky business, and when given it always suggests a scientific superstition. Things *can't* be because they aren't; nothing remains to be discovered—that is its philosophy. If this is not superstition, I *lack* a name for it. To me it seems self-evident that there *may be*—not that there are, of course, merely that there *may be*—other "fields" in which the phenomenon of motion may arise. And if I were to speculate as to what might generate such fields, I should certainly suggest as one possibility that most mysterious of all nature's things, the human personality and organism.

So it is for other types of psychic phenomena. One may formulate a negative statement of alleged scientific principle denying their possibility; but it will probably deny something else that is known to occur. If by good luck it avoids

this, it is still but a universal negative, unproved and unprovable. The phenomena of the seance room do not contradict known laws; they merely transcend these, and suggest more general laws, as yet undiscovered.

Scientific superstition is also inclined to criticize the conditions under which the phenomena of the seance room occur. They are largely dependent upon the absence of the atmosphere of hostility, to be sure; but what of it? Mediumship is a mental as well as a physical function; and with most of us, mental efficiency withers in the presence of hostility, suspicion, or physical discomfort. It is unfortunate that the medium cannot give his best performance for the man who treats him as a criminal, but it is a fact.

Likewise, psychic phenomena are largely dependent upon absence of light. Light is itself far from wholly understood, but we know at least that it has marked physical, chemical and electrical properties. The chemical process of photography, the permanence of colors, the electrical conductivity of selenium and other substances, the life cycles of most plants and of many animals—these are but a conveniently cited few of the many phenomena that are affected in one way or another by light. Why should we so light-heartedly insist that the force involved in psychic manifestations shall, of all things in the universe, remain impervious to the influence of light? If you, dear reader, scoffing at analogy, do so insist, if you damn the psychic force because it isn't constituted as you would have it—well, I can only express regret that you were not consulted by the Creator, so that your ideas of the fitness of things might have prevailed. I am willing to take the universe as I find it; and willing or unwilling, you are obliged so to take it.

The caustic critic is doubtless by now bursting with wrath because, while talking so fairly about laws and forces, I have said nothing about the spirits. Where do they come in? So far as I am concerned, they don't come in at all. I am not

talking about spirits or spirit manifestations. I am talking about psychic phenomena—phenomena which occur in such fashion as to be a function of the presence of some particular human personality, with its attendant organism; and without explanation in terms of known scientific doctrine. The definition is unambiguous. The phenomena are unfortunate in that they come to us with the label of spiritism attached to them—a label which many of us abhor. In the end, of course, we shall either show that they *are* spiritistic in origin, or else we shall show why they so consistently pretend to be so. For the present, those who do not like the label need merely tear it off. The scientist must tear it off; he cannot afford, even by implication, to be restricted to a single one of the many possible explanations.

Least of all can he afford to be tied to an explanation that does not explain. Even if the spirits are present in the room, it remains to be shown in mechanistic terms how they can move the furniture or tell what is going on at a distance. With or without the spirits, the phenomena of the seance room arise through the action of forces which we have not identified. These are presumably of electrical or biological nature, or present electrical or biological analogies. The immediate problem is to isolate them and learn the laws that govern their operation. When these laws and these forces are recognized, if they point toward the spirits of the dead as the intelligent operators, well and good. But to assume that they do this when we do not even know what they are is borrowing trouble, while to assume that they do not is equally out of order. We are entitled to no assumption at all on this point.

The present proposition is simply that certain phenomena occur. To this, in my judgment, it ought to be possible to get the assent of all intelligent persons who do not bring to the subject the adverse predisposition and prejudgment of a Houdini. No profitable attack can be made upon the problem of cause until that of occurrence is thus settled. So I believe

that psychic research should for the present concentrate upon demonstrating the reality of its phenomena, paying no attention to cause save by systematic exclusion of all known causes.

This question of occurrence is one with which each investigator must deal from his own experience. Of the many who have thus met it, I believe that none whose mind was open in the first instance has failed to answer it affirmatively. This has not made the impression it should on the public mind, for a peculiar reason.

Suppose, when Madame Curie told the world about radium, there had been general disbelief. Suppose a commission had been made up of eminent scientists, all satisfied that she was wrong. Suppose that after exhaustive investigation they reported that the facts, after all, were with her. Suppose it were then alleged and believed that by this acceptance of her claims the investigators had disqualified themselves from reporting, so that a new commission would have to be made up, of fresh skeptics. Suppose this happened again, and again, and again. The only possible outcome would be the ultimate selection of a jury so incompetent that they could not, so moss-backed and cowardly that they would not, see the facts.

Now this is ridiculous enough; yet it is exactly the standard by which one's ability as a psychic researcher is often judged. So long as one remains uncompromisingly skeptical, one's qualifications are taken for granted. But one cannot examine any case indefinitely without finding it either genuine or fraudulent. If one be honest and competent and if a genuine case occurs, one may approach it ever so skeptically but one's skepticism must be conquered by the facts. One is then, by those who find it against their interests or inclinations to grant the phenomena, at once disqualified in favor of a more permanent species of skeptic, more impervious to the facts.

This attitude is less general with reference to the sub-

jective phase than to the objective. The most hard-boiled skeptic usually is willing to concede that some of the subjective phenomena occur genuinely—they are so much the commoner that some of them have generally happened to him under conditions which make it impossible for him to explain them away! Besides, he realizes full well that he does not know all there is to be known about the human mind; he appreciates that it probably has functions and capacities far beyond those ordinarily displayed. But with reference to the objective world of his senses, he distinctly (if tacitly) takes the attitude that he knows all there is to be known, that no phenomena can ever transgress the present limits of his knowledge, and that any which appear to do so are necessarily fraudulent.

The controversy about occurrence therefore centers about the objective phenomena. It also happens that, when we are ready to debate the causes, the objective side is the one to which we can most profitably turn our attention. Accordingly it is with particular reference to the objective phenomena that I would urge the importance of dropping all else while we dispose, once for all, of the question of occurrence. This opinion I reached at a time when I still had no definite opinion of my own whether they occur or not. Since then my observations of the case about which this volume revolves have satisfied me that they do.

Tradition would have it that this disqualifies me from further discussion of things psychic; but I shall not defer to tradition. I maintain that my observations are of as much consequence as they ever were, in spite of the extraordinary fact that they have led me to a conclusion. They are even, I hope, of more value than those of one who putters and putters and putters with the problem and arrives only at a faint hearted "maybe." So I offer this volume as a contribution toward demonstrating the validity of the objective phenomena of psychic research.

Such an undertaking calls for a choice between two courses. Of the dozen or so of persons in frequent attendance at the "Margery" seances and of the hundred-odd casual sitters, not all have the same viewpoint. Some, like myself, are interested primarily in putting the question of occurrence on a solid basis. Some are likewise researchers, but feel that it is time to attack the problem of cause. Some are frankly spiritualists, coming for the experience of seeing the physical manifestations and talking (as they believe) with the dead. Some are present out of sheer curiosity. Some are friends of the medium, some acquaintances, some strangers. Some are scientists, some business men, some professional men, some just people.

It follows that all sittings do not present uniform conditions. Sometimes one can be certain that the prevention of fraud is in competent hands, sometimes not. Sometimes one can feel that no person is present against whom the question of confederacy can rationally be raised, sometimes this is not the case. Examination of the room and of the medium necessarily varies in thoroughness. The phenomena appear now in darkness and now in light. Sometimes the evening's program comprises the expected, so that any preparations made in advance are pertinent to what occurred; sometimes this is not the case. Today the sitters are those in whose accuracy of observation one has confidence, tomorrow one must make reservations here. Regardless of whether one really believes that there is fraud or error, on all these grounds and on many others one must face the fact that a comparatively small percentage of the phenomena is obtained and reported under conditions of absolute certainty. Enough *are* got under fraud-proof and fool-proof circumstances to establish the mediumship as unquestionably genuine; that is all that can be hoped for.

But the episodes which, when isolated from the mediumship as a whole and considered only on their own unbolstered face value, would not be demonstrably genuine—what shall we

do with them? There is but one possible answer: set them down honestly and faithfully, making a complete record of the mediumship. The facts which would be suppressed if we were to select the manifestations which carry their own proof, are part of the record. When we know more of the psychic laws, many of these facts which now seem to lack self-reliance will perhaps turn out to be of the utmost scientific import. And in the meantime, the absolutely unique opportunity to present a record, based on written accounts of each sitting made at the time, and covering an important mediumship from the very first seance, is one which cannot be sacrificed for any other consideration. If the pursuit of this opportunity makes it a little bit more difficult to sort out the proof of genuineness from the items that make no contribution toward such proof, this is unfortunate but unavoidable.

Moreover, we who know the mediumship best are not afraid of the less conclusive episodes. It is far better to include them in the story than to confess their suppression and leave the reader wondering just how oblique they really were. They do not prove fraud, they do not even indicate fraud. At the most, they mean simply that, on certain occasions, not all of the bare physical possibilities of fraud were successfully excluded. The reader will find, I believe, that in almost every category of phenomenon the failure to attain finality on some occasions is covered by finality attained on others.

In undertaking a complete account of the mediumship, it is not possible always to give the most conspicuous place to the most conclusive sittings. Many of the chapters will lead up to a climax of conclusiveness, but even this will not invariably hold. Accordingly, among the reference material collected at the end of the book will be found a sort of index to the episodes which are regarded as having occurred under inescapable guarantee of validity. The reader whose interest lies primarily in this aspect of the matter may take such advantage of this index as he will.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING

THERE will move through these pages a considerable number of people whose scientific or professional position is such as to have gained them a place in "Who's Who," and a large number of equally estimable folk less in the public eye. For the purposes of the present chapter, I need introduce the reader only to six persons who were alive in May, 1923, when my story opens; and to one who at that date had passed on. Others of my *dramatis personæ* will be given appropriate presentation as they appear.

Dr. L. R. G. Crandon, of 10 Lime Street, Boston, is a well-known surgeon. He comes of staunch New England stock. He was brought up in that atmosphere of extreme materialism often found in the rock-ribbed New England family as an alternative to the extreme of hard-shelled Congregational, Baptist or Methodist faith. His whole education was aimed at his present profession and, with the subsequent practice of that profession, emphasized the hard-boiled materialistic creed which he inherited. He taught surgery in the Harvard Medical School for sixteen years, and is the author of a standard textbook on surgical after-treatment.

Mrs. Crandon, my major character, was born and brought up in rural Ontario. Her maiden name was Mina Stinson. At a comparatively early age she secured employment in Boston as Secretary to the Union Congregational Church, under the pastorate of the Rev. Allen A. Stockdale. In addition to the executive abilities which this suggests, she is an accomplished musician; and her portraits will indicate that she is of attractive appearance. Personal characterization and some psychological analysis will be necessary but will be deferred.

Of several children, Mrs. Crandon was the youngest; a brother Walter was next, about five years her senior. They grew up together, in relative isolation from the older children, and were very close to one another. Walter was killed in a railroad accident some twelve years ago. During his life he was credited with psychic powers.

Dr. Edison W. Brown is sufficiently characterized by the professional prefix, and by the statement that he is an old and valued friend of Dr. Crandon. Of Mrs. Brown I need only say that her maiden name was Katherine Caldwell, and that she is one of Mrs. Crandon's intimates.

Frederick Adler has for years been agent-superintendent of the building in which Dr. Crandon has his office; he has become a close friend of the family through this contact. His mental outlook is an unusual combination of the professional and the business types.

Alexander W. Cross, because of the dramatic interest of his later years, requires more space. An English boy, brought up in Canterbury, his choice of a career took him to China, where for many years he held a post in the British customs at Shanghai. Here his duties brought him into contact with natives almost exclusively, and his outlook upon life became distinctly Chinese. In 1916 he tried to get home to volunteer. His ship was sunk by the German raider *Wolf*, and for six months he sailed the seas as a prisoner aboard that vessel. When the *Wolf*, after threading the mines of the North Sea in an effort to get home, piled up on the Danish coast, Aleck, being still a civilian, was given passage to England instead of being interned with his captors. For the balance of the war he served with distinction as commander of a large unit of Chinese laborers on the French front, rising to the rank of captain. When demobilization left him at loose ends, at a fatally advanced age, he gravitated to America and to the house of Dr. Crandon, with whom he had become well acquainted through his habit of spending his vacations in

Boston. A polite hope was maintained that he would find a position which he would be qualified to fill, and Dr. Crandon aided as well as he could the search for such a post; but as a matter of fact Aleck's long isolation in China had fundamentally unfitted him for self-support, and to some extent even for existence, in an occidental country. He became, therefore, an attaché of the Crandon household, and an exceedingly useful one. Though he had a room in Cambridge, he slept, as often as not, on the couch in the Lime Street book-room; and, in general, the Doctor looked after his material needs. In return, Aleck performed every imaginable service about the house, from librarian to errand boy, from laboriously typing the Doctor's letters and records to keeping the yellow cat out of mischief. He was an extraordinarily large person, in face and head as in body; extraordinarily innocent and single-minded; extraordinarily likable. It was understood that some day his heart would go back on him, and it did so on September 8, 1924, on the street, within sight of the Lime Street house. The degree to which he is missed out of the household marks the extraordinary success with which he avoided appearing to be what he really was—one of the tragedies of the war.

I can now get on with my story, which is that of the origin, or discovery, as you prefer, of Mrs. Crandon's mediumship. The first question which the layman puts to the investigator, with reference to any mediumistic case, has to do with how the power was first brought to light. First willingness to take the case seriously depends usually upon the degree to which it appears that the discovery was an unpremeditated accident; and in this respect Mrs. Crandon makes an excellent showing. Indeed, I must introduce her mediumship by talking not about her, but about her husband.

For many years Dr. Crandon had been an omnivorous reader. He usually took a book to bed, finishing it before resigning himself to sleep. Such a program implies a catholicity of interest, so, as a matter of course, he had been exposed to

books on spiritualism and psychic research. His reaction to these had been no greater than to other subjects; but in the spring of 1923 a profound impression was made upon him by Crawford's volumes describing his work with the Goligher circle. The materialistic doctrine, when developed to a logical climax, demands a paramount place in the external world for the observed fact; and hence the materialist should find himself peculiarly able to appraise and classify new facts, and to submit to any revision of his fundamentals which they may indicate. It was so with Dr. Crandon; he was driven to accept Crawford's observations as facts which establish themselves and require to be correlated with the rest of the scientific structure. He developed from this beginning an interest which led to the reading of practically all the available literature of psychic research, and the subject came to occupy a major place in his extra-professional mental life.

At first this new interest was not taken too seriously by his friends. It was largely as a joke that Mrs. Crandon and Mrs. Brown went, one day, on a psychic adventure. A certain clairvoyant had been well spoken of; they went to him, in a spirit of larking, to see what would happen. They expected he would try to put them off to a later date, or that they would meet some other easily recognized variety of mediumistic chicanery. Instead they got an immediate audience, and the shock of their young lives.

They insist that nothing was said or done to suggest their coming or their identity; that they must have been wholly unknown. But the medium, in trance, informed Mrs. Crandon that a male spirit was present, giving the name Walter and claiming to be her brother. Much valid material was brought out in the guise of messages from the visitor for his sister. The name of a colt which they had broken together when they were children, with trifling incidents in connection with the animal's training—this is the sort of thing that was given. The serious character of the incident was supported when,

some days later, again with no indication of his identity or of his connection with a previous sitter, Dr. Crandon got from the clairvoyant further evidential messages alleged to come from a brother-in-law Walter.

Mrs. Crandon had been told at her reading that she was herself a potential medium of great power. She laughed this off, as a seance-room commonplace, which indeed it is. But in view of the way the Doctor's sitting connected up with hers, it was agreed that the proposition should have a trial. A table was made from Crawford's specifications, and on one of the closing days of May, 1923, the Crandons, the Browns, Adler and Cross gathered in a room on the top floor of the Lime Street house. No record of the sitting exists save in the memories of those present.

The six were seated about the table, in good red light, their hands bearing easily on the table top—all in accord with convention. The motif of the occasion was a light-hearted one, and this was not wholly laid aside when the table began to move laterally and to tilt on two legs. It was assumed that its behavior was due to conscious or subconscious trickery by one or more of the group, and one after another they were sent from the room. In Mrs. Crandon's absence the table remained dead; no other sitter's exclusion affected it in the least. Nor could any direct action of her hands, feet or knees on the table be observed.

This was, of course, a more serious matter than if the experiments had indicated a collective responsibility. If the table would move only for the one person, one could waive the question whether its movements were the result of her subconscious muscular activity, or of a genuinely supernormal force; one could ask whether there was not involved, in either event, a problem of actual mediumship. In recognition of the set formula for such occasions, a simple code of responses for no and yes was proposed vocally, and accepted by the table-operating intelligence. Questions were put to the table vocally,

and answered in this code. The thing has happened approximately so, up to this point, with thousands of groups. But the present instance is exceptional in that the whole of the elaborate results which I am to describe flowed out of this simple and unimpressive beginning.

When the case ultimately reached the publication stage, it did so under my auspices. It was the desire of the Crandons to avoid personal publicity; accordingly I invented the name Margery for the psychic, and to the Doctor I applied the designation F. H. (Friend Husband). In this chapter I have given my narrative all necessary personal background; so for the rest of the story I shall employ these pseudonyms. As regards the hundred and fifty persons, more or less, who have sat in Margery's seances, I shall, in a few instances, where there is excellent reason for doing so, conceal the identity. For the major part I shall give the sitters their own names; but for conservation of space and energy, after introducing male sitters by title, I shall drop this and use surnames only.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZING THE MEDIUMSHIP

THE six persons present at the initial seance were of six minds as to exactly what they had to deal with. None of them was prepared to accept at once the table's claim of spirit agency; and they were of various shades of opinion on the abstract question of genuineness, and on the degree to which subconscious guidance by the sitters themselves would explain what they had seen. But they were agreed that they had something demanding careful and systematic inquiry.

With the addition of Dr. Frederick Caldwell, Mrs. Brown's brother, a practicing dentist in Boston, they completed what they dubbed the ABC group, from their surnames. This group sat as often as convenient, at first alternating between the Lime Street house and the Brown residence in Beachmont, later concentrating on Lime Street, where they could have a room given over entirely to seance purposes. Of friends added or admitted from time to time, I must place emphasis first of all upon:

Dr. Mark A. Richardson, a Boston physician of many years' practice, who has to his credit valuable scientific work in the study of typhoid vaccination. Twelve years ago, following the loss of two sons in the infantile paralysis epidemic, he largely retired from active practice to devote himself to a search for the malignant organism of this malady; and I believe that his modest statement in "Who's Who" does not adequately measure his achievement here.

Mrs. Richardson's maiden name was Lord. An unmarried sister; a married one, Mrs. Frothingham; a son David; a daughter "Patty"—all these relatives Mrs. Richardson has contributed to the seances from time to time.

Of F. H.'s family, his father, D. G. C., and his mother have sat occasionally; but his father has a closed mind on the subject and prefers not to attend. His wife does not come without him. F. H.'s sister, however, Laura C., instructor in Spanish in Teachers College, New York, makes up in enthusiasm for what her parents lack.

Other names which occur without characterization will be understood to stand for friends of the family. Of these, the Stewarts, the Litzelmanns and the Janneys are probably the closest, as they are the most frequent sitters. Wendell Murray should be mentioned by name as a prominent Boston lawyer, Dr. Harry W. Goodall as an M.D. of equal professional weight.

Starting with the second sitting, of June 3, 1923, a careful record was kept of all seances. Mrs. Richardson undertook the burden of preparing this document whenever she was present; in her absence F. H. does it himself. I would criticize the extent to which these records are individual documents, setting forth individual observations and impressions. They were seldom, if ever, read to and formally accepted by the others present. This leaves their accuracy more open to question than it would be had they been drawn up under a different procedure; and on their face they are often distressingly incomplete, leaving unmentioned just the thing that one most wants to know. But they are the only record of the early months of the mediumship—of its first year, in fact; and they should be received with gratitude for the information they *do* give.

In the early sittings, red light was continuous. Music from the Victrola was intermittent. The group would take seats about the table, their hands resting lightly on its top, and wait for action, which would come, after an indeterminate interval, in the shape of a curious rotary traveling of the table, around and around, few turns or many, with no tendency to break out of the circle of knees and chairs. This was rec-

ognized as a general greeting from the spirits present, and the next step was to ask how many of them there were. The table would count them by jerks or tilts; it has claimed as many as forty-four and as few as one; during the early months about a dozen was the usual number. The questions would then be asked how many pertained to each sitter; after which, by running through with the names of discarnate relatives and friends, the table answering "yes" or "no," the list would be completed. Sometimes a balance would not be struck, the name which would presumably have accounted for the last spirit or two not occurring to any sitter.

The roll complete, questions would be asked by the sitters and answered by the table, under the alleged influence of one or another of the spirits. The only alternative here to a very free suggestion of topics and specific answers by the sitters, is the cumbersome process of letting the table communicate by "yessing" letters as the sitters run through the alphabet again and again, thus ultimately spelling out a message. This was only resorted to in extreme emergencies, when no other method appeared of getting what was regarded as an important message. With the more usual and less evidential yes-and-no technique, free communication was enjoyed within the limitations of the method. The discarnate visitors would take turns at the table, and often half a dozen or more would be heard from in rapid succession. What all this meant in terms of table behavior will be made clear elsewhere.

In one direction this program was greatly simplified, in the end. Where originally there were twenty or thirty spirit controls, any or all of which might break through with messages on a given evening, the bulk of these have gradually been pushed into the background, and the brother Walter has assumed a dominant position. For the past year he has very definitely and explicitly been the chief operator on the other side. Mark and John, the two Richardson boys, his major aides, are still heard from at times. ~~The other controls~~

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though still pictured by the spiritualistic sitters as present, are never heard from any more, and seldom, if ever, mentioned by Walter; any support which they lend him is silent. This paragraph, I should say, anticipates the viewpoint toward the alleged spirit operators which is explained fully in the next chapter.

In every other sense the original simple program has been enriched by complications, which have taken two major directions. Various physical manifestations, unrelated to the business of communication, but stated to be engineered by Walter and offered apparently for their own sake, began to occur with increasing frequency and vigor. And on the other hand, while the table continued for many months to be used for the initial greetings, for the census and identification of the spirits, and for a good deal of other preliminary work, there was early developed a variety of more effective channels for the serious business of talking with the spirit operators.

Thus, during the second seance (June 3, 1923), F. H. suggested that a quicker communication might be effected by means of raps; could this be engineered? The table said yes, and halted; within a minute faint but definite raps were heard, coming in various quarters at request. Thereafter, raps and table were used interchangeably, employing the same code. The code itself was expanded, one step at a time, until it comprised the following signals:

One—No.

Two—Don't know.

Three—Yes.

Four—Good night.

Five—Good evening.

Six—Sometimes.

Seven—Silence.

In addition, a curious incomplete tilting of the table, followed by rest, came to stand for an objection to the terms of the question as unfair or unpermissible.

A conclusive improvement in the technique of communication came very shortly after the introduction of the raps, and consisted in the passage of the psychic into trance. While she was in this state, extensive conversation would flow from her lips, in the names of the various spirits who figured in the case. To encourage this, a closer approximation was made to the technique of the conventional trance mediumship, by placing Margery in a cabinet. This technical term of the seance room implies nothing more serious than a partly enclosed space. A rectangular frame was put together of seven-eighths-inch stock, consisting merely of a back and two sides. It was four feet across, three feet deep and six feet high. It was open at top and front, save for the curtains. These covered the top fairly well and hung down in front to a point well below the level of the seated medium's face.

The procedure was now to start with Margery in the open, close to the table as before, but with the cabinet behind her, waiting for her to withdraw into it; or else for her to sit initially in the cabinet, with the curtains raised. Another innovation at about the same time was the conventional circle: usually when trance was expected, and sometimes when it was not, the sitters would join hands all around. Under this procedure, lasting throughout 1923, the sitting would start in red light, with hands on the table; then, at the proper time, when Margery withdrew within the cabinet for trance, table contact would be abandoned and the circle formed. Throughout this volume, the use of the word "circle" implies the junction of hands all around; when a circle does not exist in this sense, I use some other word.

One further advance remained to be made, in the development of vocal communication without trance. I will not pause to discuss the question here whether this voice is automatic (produced by normal use of the medium's vocal apparatus, without her conscious direction) or independent (produced in space, outside her physical organism). Its place in

the present chapter is solely to mark the necessity which came with it of sitting partly in the dark. For this non-trance voice, while occurring to some degree in the red light, really prospers only in the dark. Accordingly, when it was developed to the position of a major feature of the seance routine, there were frequent passages into darkness for communication with Walter, and into light again when he had said his say. This introduced certain difficulties of observation, but had no further influence upon the external form of the sittings.

Throughout the summer of 1923 the process of development outlined above was going on. A typical sitting of this period would start in red light with Margery in the open, all hands on the table. Routine greetings from the table disposed of, the circle would be joined, Margery would enter the cabinet, and there might be a change in the conditions of illumination. Conversation with the controls would proceed, often the table, the raps, the trance and the ordinary voice all being used at different moments; and through this complex of communication would project another complex of physical phenomena. Save in so far as communication itself proceeded through physical effects like the raps and the independent voice, the objective side of the mediumship did not at once become an outstanding factor; but objective phenomena of one sort or another, as described in subsequent chapters, were usually obtained.

In the succeeding chapters, as a measure of space economy, I omit much routine information about the constitution of the group and the place of sitting on given evenings, the source of information, etc. This will all be found at the end of the volume, in connection with the list there given of all seances which have been held by Margery. All episodes throughout the text are given under date, which makes reference to this list for the routine details a simple matter.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT ABOUT THE SPIRITS?

MARGERY's mediumship presents a combination of objective and subjective phenomena. This is wholly regular. Practically all cases of objective mediumship present an accompanying subjective side, which puts forward claims of spirit interposition and spirit control; and always these claims cover the objective side too, representing the physical manifestations as carried out under the agency of the dead.

Clearly the investigator cannot accept these claims without a most careful examination—many investigators will have the greatest repugnance against accepting them at all. What is less obvious is, that the validity of the objective phenomena does not in the least depend upon the disposition we make of the subjective claims. A voice speaks or a hand writes or in some other way the extraneous personality appears and claims to be So-and-so, and to be directing the manipulation of the table, the raps, the psychic lights. If one does not believe him, but still finds the physical phenomena baffling in themselves, one must conclude that these are genuine; and that the spirit personality has been invented, consciously or subconsciously, because it is known that the psychic tradition involves spirits.

Not long since, one would have been considered soft in heart and head for this willingness to put down as subconscious whatever of fictitiousness one finds in the spirit control. But today laymen as well as scientists so well realize the vast resources of the human subconsciousness that this reproach no longer obtains. Whether the medium goes into trance or whether she remains conscious, psychology easily defines her

behavior in terms of the subconscious. We regard the full spirit control of trance as a duality of some sort; and the automatically writing or speaking entity is then a partial duality, which crowds only a portion of the normal ego out of the picture.

This hypothesis covers more ground than at first glance appears. There is evidence that duality of personality is wholly a subconscious trick—that the extra identity is a subconscious masquerade, wholly fictitious. There is equally evidence that it is an actual possession from without. But if duality is *ever* in any case due to external possession, we face an enormous problem in determining the true nature of the invader, and in answering the question whence he comes; and we cannot deny off-hand that sometimes he may be a human who has passed on. So the notion of duality, thus analyzed, is seen to cover *all* alternatives and *all* theories, including the spiritistic one.

When duality occurs, the experimenter has business with the invading personality. He must obviously treat it decently, call it by the name it gives itself, and camouflage any reservations he may have as to its precise nature. Otherwise it will "run out on him," like any other self-respecting personality under similar treatment, and he will not be able to investigate it at all. The Walter personality, real or fictitious, largely dominates Margery's seance room. One cannot attend the seances other than as a casual spectator without constant contact with Walter. One must be willing, while in the seance room, to dissemble any doubts which one holds about him. If one calls him Walter and deals with him as with the directing intelligence (which indeed, under any theory, he is), he seldom demands more.

One must, however, encounter in one's mind the question which the control occasionally propounds, "Am I Walter?" One may answer this in the affirmative, identifying the directing personality with the brother who has passed on. One

may stand on middle ground, believing it to be a duality of lesser sort—either an invader from without or a usurper from within. Finally one may adopt the most categorical negative by insisting that Walter is Margery's normal self, consciously and fraudulently masquerading. It would seem that one must definitely fix upon one or another of these three theories, as representing one's belief about this very major feature of the mediumship. But I find this unnecessary; I find it practicable, even desirable, to sit without any theory about Walter at all.

I have indicated that my present program in psychic research revolves entirely about the effort to bring general agreement on the question of occurrence of the objective phenomena. Walter, a subjective factor, need not count, does not count, in this program. I am entirely willing to meet him on any basis that may seem expedient in the interest of provoking a good display of the physical manifestations. One's attitude toward the personality, if one have an attitude toward him, will of course color one's attitude toward the things he says; but his alleged fictitious character must not color one's outlook upon the physical phenomena themselves. These must always be judged upon their intrinsic, physical merits, with the realization that any element of fiction in the Walter personality has been invented to go with the physical stuff because convention calls for a spirit control in the seance room.

Bearing all this in mind, it is obviously much easier to assure that one will have a correct attitude toward the physical events of the sittings if one is careful to have no attitude at all toward Walter. This is the one certain way to prevent Walter from coloring one's outlook upon the physical side. So what Walter's true character is, I think, should be waived until we reach agreement on occurrence and come to determination of cause. At the present time and in the present connection I do not care a snap of the fingers whether it is Walter himself speaking, or something else. In the seance

room and out of it I ignore this question—I am completely indifferent whether the Walter of the seance room is the dead brother, or something else, or what else.

One point, however, must be made clear. We separate the objective and the subjective sides of mediumship, for convenience of present investigation. But these two aspects occur together; they must belong together and enjoy a common cause. For they are not merely simultaneous, they are completely entangled. At all stages the comment of the control parallels and deals with the phenomena. We disentangle the two elements as an expedient of investigation; but ultimately, to complete the investigation, they must again be brought together, in connection with the formulation of cause. Therefore, while I shall ignore the question of what Walter is, he remains an integral part of the phenomena and his presence cannot be ignored. I shall constantly have to refer to him quote him, etc.; and I shall always call him Walter, without quotation marks. When it seems necessary to a full account of the phenomena that I give his words or his viewpoints *in extenso*, I shall do just that.

This book is a record of facts observed. In many places Walter's statements constitute so fundamental a fraction of the fact that they cannot be omitted. For in the end the explanation that explains the physical acts must explain Walter; and if he is to be explained he must be recorded. So I am not going to omit his words; I am going to include them throughout, without further explanation or apology. When I do this, please do not read into the name Walter anything more than it carries; I cannot repeat this explanation of my attitude toward him on every page. I could, I suppose, attach an asterisk to his name wherever it occurs, with footnotes referring to the present chapter; but I am not going to do that either. I am going to make the demand upon the reader's memory and common sense, that he carry with him through the book this explanation of what I mean when I say Walter. And the same applies in

its entirety to John and Mark and all the other controls and communicators who appear from time to time.

There is one further point here which must be understood. Many things happen in the seance room which are demonstrably, or apparently, of psychic origin. Many rearrangements of the apparatus, on the other hand, are made by the hands of the sitters. The conventional expedient for one who wished to dodge responsibility for Walter's reality would be to describe psychic effects in the passive voice: the table was lifted, the voice was heard to say, the bell was rung, the scale-pans were moved, etc. But in many instances this mode of expression would leave the reader in doubt whether the action were to be taken as psychic or as engineered by the sitters. I therefore, throughout this volume, use the more direct statements: Walter said, Walter did, Walter moved, Walter lifted, Walter rang, etc. This is purely a question of vocabulary; and with the present explanation, I expect the reader to refrain from interpreting such statements as anything more than an assignment to supposedly psychic causes of the acts so described.

PART II

THE INFORMAL STAGE OF THE MEDIUMSHIP

CHAPTER V

ADVENTURES WITH THE TABLE

IN chronicling mediumship on any such scale as the present effort, it is customary to give the story seance by seance. But the narrative of Margery's mediumship will be more interesting and more informative if we abandon the attempt to reproduce whole seances, and trace the history of each type of phenomenon, from its beginning to whatever of climax it offers. I shall therefore present the material in this way, starting with the physical aspect of the table manifestations which marked the onset of Margery's powers.

We have ultimately to deal with two things here. There is the shuffling and tilting of the table, with hands on its top; this I term table "animation." Then there is complete "levitation," all four legs leaving the floor simultaneously. The conditions surrounding the two during the period covered by this chapter were usually the same. But there is an important distinction. Animation is always open to the suspicion that it may be due to subconscious shoving and pressing down by the sitters; true levitation, if genuine, is a manifestation of actual objective powers, and if fraudulent must necessarily depend upon some other trick than the use of the hands on the *top* of the table.

The suggestion here arising, that the two be dealt with separately, however, is vetoed by the manner in which they occur together. Not alone does levitation often proceed out of ordinary animation; there are numerous instances where it is impossible to say which of the two is present, or where the one passes into the other. I therefore deal with both aspects of table manipulation in this single chapter.

The incidents here will not impress one who is inclined to

regard the mediumship critically. One disposed to attribute table phenomena to fraud will look to feet and legs for the source of that fraud, as well as to hands; and while the ABC members built up satisfaction in their own minds against this possibility, their records do not make any showing against it. Again, they had red light so generally that they do not usually specify that it was present; but the record shows that it was absent just often enough to rob one of confidence that, when not mentioned, it was present. Partly through lack of experience in seance recording and partly because they did not realize that their records would ever become the source for a general publication of the case, they have left many other important questions open. The theme of this and succeeding chapters must therefore be the interesting succession of more ambitious phenomena, rather than progression toward proof of validity. The presumption of genuineness must shine upon this stage of the mediumship by reflection from later and better recorded episodes.

The record of June 3, 1923, may be quoted in some detail to show just what the table was doing. With Mrs. Caldwell, mother of two of the sitters, as the accredited spirit operator, "the table followed Caldwell out through the corridor into the bedroom, and forced him up on the bed, rumpling all the mats in transit. Then, on request for more, the table started downstairs after him, when we stopped it to save the wall plaster. Back again in the seance room, the operator showed her affection for her son and daughter, at opposite ends of the group, by leaving the floor *altogether* and attempting to get first into one lap, then into the other. Brown said, 'Apparently nobody here cares for me,' whereupon the table said 'Yes' and went up on him with two feet. F. H.'s grandmother then came, climbed on his lap, and answered all questions as might be expected." At another point the record indicates that the table gave the "yes" response repeatedly while wholly or partly in the lap of a sitter.

The use of the word "altogether" was not an error. What the table was really doing was to tilt sharply on two legs, placing the other two on the lap or knees of the sitter. One's impression that this would involve motion of the table over the floor while on two legs, the sitters who were present check up emphatically. It is not entirely clear whether, without immediate detection, this could be done by normal manipulation from above the table. But when we come to the "altogether," we are told that the two remaining legs rose from the floor, so that the table rested wholly on the two legs that bore upon the sitter's anatomy. This, if not genuine, must have involved fraud from beneath the table.

The next sitting, of June 9, was held at the Brown house. There was used first a light table, then one of thirty-eight pounds. The phenomena went along about as before. But a tin plate, placed on the shelf under the table, was moved off and spilled on the floor without any motion of the table. Replaced on top of the table, it was again, by request of the sitters, moved laterally without the table's being tipped or the plate's being touched. Occurring in red light, this was taken by the sitters as proving the independence of the force that was at work on the table; and while the record does not show the impossibility of a thread's having been attached to the plate under the conditions that obtained, this impossibility probably existed.

When a repetition of the tin-plate episode was sought at the next Beachmont sitting, the operators ignored the invitation. The report of this sitting specifies that the table was tipped up on all four sides, and on each with varying degrees of intensity, which again offers ground for debate as to the sufficiency of ordinary subconscious bearing-down by the sitters.

This four-sided technique became fairly regular. In fact, greetings of the general character described, tilting or jerking or circling of the table to count the spirits present and to give

answers in the yes-and-no code and in the extensions thereof, became so much the regular thing, at all sittings up to the end of November, that I shall take it quite for granted, and chronicle only the incidents of slightly more content.

By June 23, the ambitions of the sitters had reached the point where Walter was asked whether he could not supply true levitation. He did not know, but would try. After quite a period of silence and inaction, Brown "sensed that the table was about to rise"; within five seconds it did so, staying completely in air for about three seconds, nearly level, four inches or more off the floor. It came down gently, without strain or falling. After repeated attempts this seemed to get easier; and at the end, the customary four good-night signals were given through full levitation. Though the record is not explicit, it suggests strongly that all this occurred in light, and those present are pretty sure that the custom of putting out the lamp from time to time had not yet arisen. Hands were on the table during this levitation, as in ordinary animation of the table.

At the end of this sitting, Brown and Adler had lost a quarter-pound apiece, and Margery a pound and a half. This observation was not again attempted—why, I cannot imagine. It would seem that a disciple of Crawford would have made it almost automatically.

Table tilting of the ordinary variety was carried on sluggishly and unsatisfactorily at the start of the June 24 sitting, due, it was believed, to frequent changes in the personnel and order of those at the table, and to a rapid and confusing fire of questions by inept sitters. The record makes the intriguing suggestion that the table traveled about in a circular path, as though to convey the idea that it was confused. Later, under greater calm, the tilting improved. There was present, for the first time, a sitter not directly acquainted with the Lime Street household—Dr. A. A. Roback, instructor in Psychology at Harvard. He and Goodall spent a lot of time on

the floor, with flashlights, verifying that no feet or legs were touching the table; yet it continued to tilt sharply. Then, taking their positions at diagonally opposite legs, they held first one and then the other of these, those at the table not knowing which leg was at a given moment immobilized. But the table continued to tilt cleanly and without any trace of experiment to determine in which direction it was free.

Levitation was again asked for on June 30; again Walter did not know but would try. The table made various circular excursions, apparently attempting to rise, at the same time remaining with apparent preference about an arm's length from the psychic. After two or three minutes of this it rose completely about an inch off the floor. Repeated efforts scored an accumulative success. Finally the table was held in levitation for good intervals, several times; and complete levitation was once or twice used to answer "yes" or "no."

Later, having been carried downstairs to where the piano stood, the table was used as the instrument in a very amusing episode. Clark, an artist friend of F. H. and Murray, was among the spirit controls of the evening. In life, his sole musical accomplishment had been a single tune, which he had been wont to play in staccato, one-finger style on the piano. With the table in front of the piano, Clark tried to get a corner of it up on the keys, but the absence of overhang prevented; and the effort to put a leg up resulted in spilling the top of the table off the legs and on the floor. After other failures, the sitters offered to screw a piece of wood to the table top, projecting like a finger. This done, and with the hands of the sitters on the table top as usual, the performance was given with success, Clark's tune being played through several times, correct in note as well as in time, and with a crashing effect on the final note characteristic of Clark's lifetime version. All the members of the group were supposed to have their eyes shut and their heads turned away; all stated that they had fulfilled this requirement. Not all knew Clark's tune.

On July 4, as occasionally on other dates, questions were asked which made joyful and sorrowful replies in order; and the table was credited with a variation in tempo representing these emotions.

F. H.'s parents were present on July 13, and among the spirits turned up by the usual census was F. H.'s sister Nannie, who died at the age of four. The table climbed into the laps of both the old folks in the usual way, then went quickly toward the stairs. The sitting was in the residence of D. G. C., so it was possible to infer that Nannie wanted her baby chair brought down. She verified this; and when it was fetched, "the table overwhelmed it." Her father wanted to know why, if the table could tilt, it couldn't levitate. It could, and did, after a series of efforts, to a height of four inches. D. G. C. said he did not see it, so it repeated the performance, this time coming down with a crash.

July 14 saw a repetition of Clark's one-finger musical comedy, and at the end there was good night with four full levitations, pronounced the most "effortless" yet experienced.

The record for July 23 for the first time speaks of putting out the light to magnify the phenomena. The result was immediate; extraordinary levitation was had, with amusing antics, on a scale that tempts me to rather long quotation:

"Almost at once the table levitated about one-half foot from the floor. At our delight Walter showed almost hilarious joy. The table went around in quick, joyous circles as though laughing with us, then made a series of levitations, each higher than the one before—rising finally at least a foot and a half from the floor. After each levitation, at our expressions of delight and wonder, the table tilted three quick yeses, on each of the four sides consecutively, then went around in quick circles as of delight and laughter, then repeated the levitation. While we counted out seconds, the table remained in levitation, counting with us part of the time by swaying back and forth in air. Once it stayed in levitation for sixteen

seconds, again for thirty seconds. A hilarious conversation followed, each reply being repeated on all four sides of the table, followed by a series of quick circles on the floor as though laughing."

There is no indication whether hands were joined during this performance, or free on the table top; in all probability they were free. The whole demonstration then depends upon the good faith of the sitters, with the reservation that it would take several of them, working in difficult synchronism, to produce what was experienced. I ought also to reserve that my contact with them leaves no question in my mind about their good faith.

Later on this evening F. H.'s grandmother (paternal) came to the table "and climbed up on his shoulders." This marks an altitude record for that sort of thing.

On July 28, we are told, "the table levitated a foot and a half, remained in mid-air as we counted off seconds—once twenty-one, again twenty-five—then thumped on the floor twenty-one times with all four legs at once, *i.e.*, levitating completely after each blow to make the next one possible. The table was pushed down on the floor here with tremendous force." As a partial explanation of this success, Walter stated that two of those present were psychic—Stewart and Whittaker.

It seems improbable that anybody would testify in exactly the terms quoted without visual evidence, hence I infer that there was light on the above occasion. The record of the twenty-ninth is specific; there was light, dim but sufficient. After quite a circus performance with the animated table, levitation was had up to thirty-five seconds. Two techniques were tried. First they sat with all hands joined and resting on the table near the edge; then with all hands off the table and joined in the more conventional circle. The contact between the hands while on the table in the usual way was not new; it had been customary, but without the degree of

insistence that would entitle it to rank as a measure of hand control. With both these procedures, levitation of four and five inches was obtained.

Table operation continued to advance in vigor, if not in rigor of conditions. On July 30, "Walter came at once and within a minute and a half had the table in levitation, though it had usually taken him ten minutes to get so far. All answers by the table came on four sides consecutively, followed by a further repetition through complete levitation. The levitations became more and more strenuous, developing into such terrific shocks of table upon floor that the shelf was detached from the table. Walter and Clark, the operators, were greatly pleased with themselves for having thus broken the table." It would seem almost certain that the light had not been put out early enough to throw this performance into the dark, but the record is not explicit.

The record of July 29, as we have seen, indicates that variation in the position of the hands during levitation had been introduced. Later records do not specify what was done with the hands on a given date. The statement for August 2, however, suggests that the hands-on-table style was still the regular one, for "D. G. C. wanted levitation without contact, so hands were joined and held at the edge of the table without touching it. The table levitated, after repeated efforts, at first only a few inches, later about a foot and a half." There was an incident here, which need not be recorded since it was wholly personal, but which enables F. H. to remember distinctly that there was light, though the record is silent.

On August 4 there was eighteen-inch levitation for thirteen seconds, levitation without contact, and a dancing by the table in time with the music from the Victrola—whether to be recognized as true levitation or as mere animation the record does not indicate. On the following evening the table "kept time with the singing by tilts, circling and true levitation. It tilted with Stewart sitting on it, spilling him off to the floor."

Again on the eleventh there was levitation without contact, and Stewart was twice dumped off the table.

The table displayed unaccustomed conduct on August 12. It rose lengthways very slowly and stayed up; it kept slow time with the music; it sank slowly, reaching an even keel with the last note of the music from a three-minute record. This was repeated on four sides of the table. At one time the table got off of three legs at once, and finally came clear of all four, resuming normal position very slowly. Its curious conduct was presently explained in terms of a spirit control who was present for the first time. (See Chapter LIV.)

August 18 developed another odd incident. Attempting to sit at the Brown's, nothing was got except a suggestion of the same behavior of the table as on the twelfth, after which it became wholly quiet and the group adjourned to a later hour in Lime Street; here a successful sitting was held, the table behaving in all respects as usual. Levitation is chronicled for the nineteenth, and when Walter answered questions with the table, the vibrations of his replies were felt on Margery's chair. Some of these answers came as tilts, without hand contact; so did the four good-night tilts. This, as distinct from levitation without contact, was new. As a final episode, the performance of the twelfth was here repeated, by the same control.

September 9 saw good levitation with and without contact. On the twenty-first, "Walter came with the table and kept time to the music by full levitation throughout the length of the selection. He danced in the air with the table." F. H. draws upon his recollection for the statement that dancing, on this or another date, brought all four legs off the floor at once.

Something new and startling was provided on September 30. In red light, the table moved and levitated almost at once. The light was put out to accelerate the phenomena, and, on what philosophy I know not, a circle of all men was formed with the same aim. The table promptly turned over on its

back; no one presumably touched it, says the scribe, dutifully adding that while she has no doubt of this, of course she doesn't actually know it. The light was turned on, the table inspected and replaced, the light put out; and over on its back went the table again. On each overturn there were two loud bangs, about a second apart; the first doubtless when the table went up on end, the second when it went on over on its back. "Richardson & Stinson, wreckers," said Walter, in attributing a share in this performance to John and Mark.

It becomes, of course, increasingly difficult, the further this sort of thing progresses, for Walter to find anything new to do with the table. On October 7 it turned half over without hand contact. On the fourteenth, after successful levitation, the light was extinguished; and, after a pause of some moments, the table turned completely over twice, very rapidly and without the slightest warning.

On October 11, in the hope of getting impressions of the "terminals" with which Walter does his work—F. H. and his friends are always insistent that there is a psycho-physical apparatus for these phenomena, that they are in no sense miracles—the under surfaces of the top and shelf were coated with modeling clay. In red light the table responded in its usual fashion but not so freely as usual. Walter was asked whether the clay could be responsible for this sluggishness. This question he did not answer, but expressed doubt that the clay would do what it was there for; could you get an impression of a blast of wind? Before the sitting of October 18 the clay was removed, and the performance reached its usual high level. In red light the table responded quickly, tilted in time to the music, tilted good evening all around the circle, and twice levitated six inches or more off the floor. With the table in mid-air, the experiment was tried of standing up, finger tips on the table, to see whether it would follow; it refused to do so, falling heavily to the floor.

The record of October 18 gives a place to an incident

reported by Margery, on her own authority alone. She entered a restaurant at three o'clock in the afternoon, and sat down at one of the smaller tables. After her order was served, the lady opposite her called the waitress and asked her to put something under the table, that it was making her seasick. It was in fact tilting sharply first to one end and then to the other. Margery withdrew in embarrassment, leaving her meal half eaten.

On October 20, after the usual performance in light, the table was twice overturned in the dark. On the twenty-second, there was full levitation to a height of eight inches or more, with dancing motions to fit the music. This recurred on the twenty-fifth, the table, while fully levitated, moving in greeting toward the new sitters. And at all occasions through October and November, with a dramatic exception to be duly chronicled (Chapter XVII), table action was strong and continual. The most significant single session was that of November 3, in the presence of three serious investigators from Harvard, with none of the ABC group save Margery and F. H. This sitting is described fully elsewhere; I mention it here as negating any theory of confederacy.

During a flying trip to Europe in December, 1923, Margery gave several sittings at which the table was a major feature; these appear in Chapter XIX. After the return, the Lime Street routine was resumed under new conditions, which brought about a radical change in the table's importance and in its behavior. It seems best, therefore, to close out the present chapter here, reserving table incidents of 1924 for a later place. The narrative, I hope, will have justified the initial statement that it would be amply interesting, but, when isolated from other facts tending to support the mediumship, not at all conclusive.

To these supporting facts we shall come in due course. For the present, I merely emphasize that the table episodes of 1923, if they are to lead toward any conclusion at all, must

point either toward genuineness, or toward a type of fraud involving the confederacy of several sitters. I need hardly labor this point; it should be obvious that Margery herself, without aid from other quarters of the circle, could not have used hand and foot to induce the table to behave as it did. That the records of this period give no information as to the order of sitting, and hence permit no analysis in search of the hypothetical confederate or confederates, remains a serious defect only so long as the working hypothesis of fraud remains open. When we come to large groups of phenomena, oft repeated, and of necessity genuine, we can afford to waive the question of who was in a position to lend the manifestations a helping hand or foot at the earlier sittings.

CHAPTER VI

THE MYSTERIOUS RAPPER

WE have already seen, in Chapter III, that almost coincidentally with the onset of table disturbances there came raps. Like the table motion, these were primarily an instrument of communication, and only secondarily an objective phenomenon. They *were* objective, however, and with them the idea of sub-conscious fraud largely vanishes. They are of definitely alleged supernatural origin; they are to be discussed, and accepted or rejected, on that basis.

When they first came, on June 3, they proved that they were under intelligent control by shifting their locus on request and by answering questions. They were produced on either end of the table, or on the floor, at will. They were described as faint but definite, sounding like something soft inside a wooden box. When heard through F. H.'s stethoscope, applied to the table, they were so magnified as to be unlike anything in his experience.

The raps recurred on June 16, being directed at Murray, who used Brown's stethoscope on them with the same result. On the seventeenth, "Murray's father came with very emphatic raps, identified himself, and retired"; so it was assumed that he had been the rapper of the sixteenth. June 24 brought more raps, lasting for some time, coming without any motion of the table, and plainly audible with or without the stethoscope.

After this, the next notable outbreak came on July 29, when raps were heard, in dim red light, on the table top, the table leg, various points of Stewart's chair, and other places. The following evening, Walter having promised something new, noises came as of pencil taps on the door frame, as of

footsteps in the hall, and as of raps in various parts of the room.

On August 19, with Margery out of the cabinet, raps were distinctly heard; then after she entered the cabinet there were distinct raps on the side of the cabinet. Margery's hands, we may assume, were held, since this was the invariable custom while she was in the cabinet; but the scribe fails to specify this.

Again on September 9, Margery being in the cabinet in darkness, knocks were heard on the side of the cabinet—first as with finger nails or a hand, then heavy thuds as of a knee. There followed knocks on the floor and table. Walter requested silence, and after some delay eighteen raps were heard on the cabinet. What these were supposed to signify was never learned.

On September 23 good night was said with raps; on the twenty-eighth Walter rapped six and nine when these numbers were mentioned in conversation. "Raps for silence" are mentioned under date of October 20. In my experience Walter is more apt to use raps for this signal than for any other purpose—even when he is talking and using the table freely, I have heard him ask for silence with raps.

On November 3 the Harvard investigators heard raps on the floor, either from within the cabinet or from close by it. These were not random demonstrations as the raps are sometimes; they came only in greeting or in response.

A sitting was held on November 11, at a hotel in Andover, Mass. Stewart's ninety-one-year-old father was present as a sort of guest of honor; the holding of the sitting in so unusual a place was in fact a mark of respect on his birthday, and a means of making it possible for him to attend. Toward the end of the seance, the town clock struck nine outside; and after each stroke of the clock a metallic blow was heard in the room, apparently struck on the standard of a brass lamp at the rear and far removed from any person present. The record

does not cover the point explicitly, but the description of other phenomena implies visibility and leaves one to infer that red light was probably continuous. In any event, light or darkness, the sitting was of course held in a private room, with door locked against the possibility of intrusion; and the incident is about as strongly suggestive of genuineness as anything recorded of this period of the mediumship.

CHAPTER VII

MARGERY GOES INTO TRANCE

WE come now to a very important phase of the mediumship, and one which, though wholly subjective, is of extreme value in its suggestions of genuineness. I say "suggestions" with deliberate conservatism, well aware that the present chapter will seem, to many who have had mediumistic contacts, to warrant the use of a stronger word.

During the third sitting, on June 9, 1923, F. H. became convinced that the phenomena were what they purported to be—the result of action on this sphere by those who have passed on. With characteristic energy and ambition he addressed himself to the task of keeping the mediumship pointed forward. He reminded the invisible operators that the technique of communication with table and raps was a clumsy one and expressed the view that better ways ought to be found. He himself put forward the possibility of using the medium's vocal apparatus. Margery appreciated that this meant trance; she was a little afraid of the step, and she was reluctant to resign the position of a spectator. So she said emphatically: "I will do nothing of the sort." Her husband rejoined: "Little sister will do exactly as big brother says." To this proposition the table gave an enthusiastic assent.

Hands remained on the table for several minutes, with no further action. Then the attention of all was attracted to Margery, who sat touching the sides of her face with her hands, in a curious fashion foreign to any habitual gesture of hers. She sighed deeply, closed her eyes, swayed in her chair—then, in an abrupt, loud voice, there came from her lips the words: "I said I could put this through!"

For forty minutes she spoke steadily in the personalities of Walter, of Mrs. Caldwell, and of F. H.'s paternal grandmother. Then she woke up, slowly, her cheeks and chin wet with what the sitters thought to be neither tears nor perspiration; I assume that what they had in mind was ectoplasm.

The trance voice became at once the standard procedure of the Lime Street seance room for extended communication, but under an unusual scheme. Ordinarily, of course, a medium goes into trance to mark the beginning of the sitting, and comes out to mark its end. But Margery would be normal for the better part of the time, simply going off when Walter was ready to use her for lengthy talk, and coming back when he had said what he had to say. Often she would thus pass into and out of trance several times in the course of a single sitting; and between trances the action would go right along, using other methods of communication and producing physical phenomena.

The number of controls who spoke directly through the entranced medium was severely limited. Most of the lesser spirits had to have Walter relay what they wanted to say. Walter, in fact, was the only one who spoke with large freedom; after him the two controls of the initial trance; from no other spirit operator were more than isolated words or short sentences ever had directly. These three trance talkers had, from the start, voices which were easily distinguishable from one another and from Margery's normal speech. Nor was the trance exclusively a talking one. Gestures, facial mobility, pantomimes, motor control of the entire organism—all this marked the trance personalities as completely in the saddle, rather than as partial dualities of automatic character.

There was trance on June 10 and 16, following the model of the ninth, and bringing out nothing of particular interest save some additional controls. On the seventeenth, Margery was thrown into trance for the production of the psychic music (see Chapter IX). This trance lasted twenty-eight

minutes without a spoken word, the idea being that Walter was working on the promised physical manifestation. Doubtless the trance, used in this connection, could be explained in terms of the necessity for keeping the psychic passive. When the climax was at length reached, as the promised phenomenon was heard, the medium's head lifted in a smile and she squeezed the hands of those next her; then she came awake at once.

June 23 was given over to physical phenomena, with little communication and no trance. On the twenty-fourth, too, Walter used the trance only to explain his failure to keep a promise. But on June 30 the trance developed a new faculty of writing and drawing. There had been trance speech, Walter relaying messages from several others. Then suddenly, in red light and with the psychic's eyes closed, her hand pointed to Roback and she said: "I'll draw something for you." Pencil and an old envelope were hastily rummaged for and placed before her. Her hand drew a series of circular arcs, concave upward, the lower one drawn first and the upper one last. The voice interjected, in explanation: "Here *you* are (pointing to the bottom); here *I* am (in the first arc); and here (as the hand drew, in one bold stroke, a vertical line passing through all the arcs) are the rest of them."

The envelope was then turned over, and a message printed on the back, fluently and without hesitation. The envelope was pushed toward Roback and held by the psychic's hand until he took it; then she laid the pencil down, as though finished. The message, in Latin, read, "*Qui creavit te sine te, non salvit te sine te.*" The translation, a bit loosened up from the terse Latin idiom, would be: "He who created you without any aid from you cannot save you without your help." I do not know whether it is a quotation, but assume that it is; its pertinence would consist in the implication that one must accept the truth of spiritualism before one can get anywhere, spiritually, in this world or in that to come.

There was a distinguished guest on July 1—no less a per-

sonage than Dr. William McDougall, Professor of Psychology at Harvard, and dean of his profession in English-speaking lands. Introduced by Roback, this was the first of his numerous sittings. After other incidents had passed off, Margery went into trance; then, in the Walter personality, she rose and shook hands very formally with McDougall, saying that he was highly regarded on the other side and was a great help to the circle, that the communicator wanted to serve him and was very happy to make his acquaintance. A message was then written automatically for him: "We create our world for ourselves; we make our own heaven and hell." He was asked whether he remembered who had said this to him. His reply is not recorded.

Walter next drew for Roback a design similar to that of the night before. The arcs were this time concave downward, and were put in from the top, passing downward. There were twenty-one of them; the intersecting line was there, too. The arcs were drawn first; then the words "1-2-3, you; 4, me" were written in, as seen in the photograph; then came the long line and the concluding words, "the rest of us." This and its prototype of the night before were obviously intended to stand for a graphic representation of the three dimensions in which we mortals reside, a fourth that is Walter's habitat, and the higher ones—apparently to a total of twenty-one—inhabited by still more advanced personalities.

On July 4 and 13 there was no trance, communication being by the technique of the code. On the fourteenth, Walter talked freely through trance, relaying messages from his "gang." He complained that there was great confusion over there, that they seemed to think he had a dozen tongues. I have heard other spirit controls, with other mediums, draw the same picture of spirits jostling one another out of line to communicate. Walter again wrote a message for Roback, this time in Italian. It ran, "Benche mi addia detto la verita non gli potei credere. E sazziiolver sapertutto." F. H. took

it to a linguist, who was not able to translate it completely. The first sentence means, "Although the truth is clear to me, he is not able to believe"; but the word ending in a consonant stumped him. This must be either an imported slang expression, or sheer nonsense. The linguist did not recognize it as slang; but F. H.'s bootblack did, and supplied the translation: "He is saturated to the point of disgust with the belief that he knows everything." Liberty has been taken here; the figure of speech which the original employs to represent the notion of saturation to repletion is not one that can be presented to a respectable English-speaking audience! The unprintability of the text in English does not argue against its having been printed in Italy, so it may still be a quotation—I do not know.

Roback got another note in Italian on the twenty-second, after the sittings of the fifteenth and twenty-first had brought out trances which need not be further reported. As originally written it stood, "*Mi prolai in una selva oscura che la diritta via era smarrita.*" At once the word "*prolai*" was crossed out, and "*volai*" written in above; and the last word was revised to read "*smarrita.*" Next night, the word "*trorai*" was written alone, with no explanation. Students of Italian will recognize the passage as one from the Divine Comedy, "It came to me in a dark forest that the direct way was lost." But the critical point remains to be told. The words "*prolai*," "*volai*" and "*trorai*" are three variant readings for this line, between which, I am informed that classicists have been unable to choose!

On July 23 Walter talked long and freely in trance, but said nothing I need quote here.

On the twenty-fourth, there came to Cross two bits of writing in Anglicized Chinese. One read, "*Kein Yuen hang li ching*"—the great General Kein Yuen is here. Aleck said that this name was one to conjure up horror with, and that his only explanation for its delivery to him was that some deceased

Beneche mi addia

Detto la verita —

non gli poiei

credere —

E sazz' il vole

saper tutto

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4

1 2 3

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 2 3 4 5

The Greek script of page 55

The automatic drawing of page 51

The Italian text of page 51

THREE OF THE AUTOMATIC SCRIPTS OF CHAPTER VII

Chinese friend was spoofing him. It will be seen that Aleck had gone the whole distance in acceptance.

The second of these scripts read, "Chu hi," and means "Chinese man." While a boy at Canterbury School, Aleck had a face so broad and eyes so peculiar that the boys, as boys will, hung a name on him, just as an American youngster might get nicknamed "Chink" if his facial contours suggested the Chinese type. Rupert, Aleck's dead brother, was stated to be responsible for the reproduction of this old nickname in Margery's seance room; and Rupert was in fact at Canterbury with Aleck.

Walter was in writing vein on this occasion. Roback got a line in French, "A bon entendeur, salut,"—To a good listener, greeting. F. H., having asked his grandmother about the possibilities of converting his father, got the very pat line, "Serene I fold my hands, and wait." Murray got one from the deceased artist Clark, "When earth's last picture is painted, you'll understand."

An attempt to write in German for Laura C. produced an awful mess, the perfectly intelligible words, "Ruckert says," being followed by, "Vor reden steht ein bild des das er werden soll und voerves nicht ist is nicht trieds soll." This was written, once, in such fashion that it flowed off the paper on to the table top. A new sheet was offered, and without opening her eyes Margery repeated the script, all on the paper this time. Next night a corrected version was offered, with substantial accuracy, permitting translation. The amended German was: "Vor jedem steht ein bild des, das er werden soll; and vor er es nicht ist, ist nicht sein friede voll." The second "vor" still seems questionable, but the sense is clear: "Before every man there stands a picture of that which he is to be; and so long as he falls short of this, he is not at peace with himself."

For July 29 there was a return to Chinese, this time in ideograph form. Two complex symbols were written, both of

which Cross said meant something. The one stands for Shang ti, God of homes; the other for Tu ti, Great God of All Gods. Aleck could attach no particular pertinence to the mention of these names in his presence. Walter said he didn't do it, that it was somebody else on his side.

For several evenings Walter had been talking about a plan for taking the psychic over to his side and seeing what she could see. While she was in trance on the twenty-ninth, she began to breathe heavily, to groan, and to whimper, "I don't want to, I don't want to!" She cried as though in great mental and physical agony, and called her husband's name. After several minutes of this, which the sitters found quite terrifying, she came out. She remembered nothing except a sensation of falling into a black hole at terrific speed. It left a most unpleasant impression, with a desire to avoid a repetition. Next night Walter said that the experience had been due to a miscarriage of his plans for taking her "over there"; he "had not succeeded in having her arrive anywhere."

A close friend of D. G. C. for many years had been Minot J. Savage, prominent Unitarian minister. On August 2, Walter wrote: "Mr. Minot says, 'I min faders hus er mange voligar.'" This turns out to be a Swedish version of "In my father's house are many mansions." There is no apparent reason why Savage should address D. G. C. in Swedish or produce this passage in his presence, but that is the closest that F. H. can come to making any sense at all of the incident.

F. H. has in his possession, of course, all of Margery's scripts; and the collection includes three which must have been overlooked in making the records of the evenings on which they came. One is apparently in Dutch: "Fred voer miteder"—Fred wants to take part; its significance is not even suggested by F. H. A second, in English, "I will send you word from Morales," was delivered to Laura C. a few days after she had returned from Spain, but it means nothing to her. The third is self-explanatory, the Greek word "skepw-

Rüchert says
vor jedem stent ein bild des
das er werden soll
und vor er es nicht ist.

nicht sein triede soll.

JO LIME, GENTRY
BOSTON

did it, and when it came
off the east pane went
down bang. Then Cunningham
put back the light west
pane and it went down
carrying the heavy east
pane.

volai
mi polai in una
selva oscura che
cadretta vi era
~~smarritta~~ smarritta

I will send you
word from

Morales

THREE MORE OF THE AUTOMATIC SCRIPTS, AND A SAMPLE OF
MARGERY'S NORMAL HAND

mai," "you are skeptical," written twice in good Greek script, and addressed to Roback.

Trance occurred on August 5, 11, 18, and 19, but nothing was said or done that I need detail here. The technique of voice communication without trance having then become sufficiently developed, it was substituted for trance and the latter to all intents and purposes was abandoned. Walter does not usually thus discard an old tool, even when he has a new one; he prefers to retain them both. His willingness to dispense with the trance was doubtless due to the question whether it is wise for the psychic to be entranced if this can be avoided.

On October 20, over her resistance, she was thrown momentarily into trance while Walter explained that he did it just to show that he still could. In November, trance was revived for four days in an emergency which makes a chapter (XVII) by itself. With these exceptions, the trance phase of the mediumship ended in August, after a life of some two months.

The trances were unquestionably genuine, viewed physiologically. Margery was surrounded by doctors of high caliber—F. H., Richardson, Goodall, Brown. None of them ever made the slightest exception to her seizures. When I saw it in November, too, the trance displayed valid symptoms so far as my knowledge and judgment went. There remains the question of the origin of the invading personalities, which I shall not discuss; and that of the source of the things they said and wrote, of which I must say a word.

Margery has been exposed, in school, to French, Latin, and even to Greek. I am certain that she knows no word of Swedish or German, or any more Italian than might be pieced together out of a schoolgirl's acquaintance with Latin. Of the Chinese, the presence of Cross in the house suggests that one speak with a little more scientific reserve, the smaller pertinence of the Chinese fragments introduces a larger possibility that they may have been picked subconsciously off

Aleck's books and boxes. Indeed, it is conventional thus to explain the automatic use of foreign languages, as due to sub-conscious memory of scraps with which the eye has had random contact—a contact which must occur with some freedom to every civilized literate person.

The fragmentary nature of Margery's writings would support this theory in her case, but their very general pertinence weighs heavily against it. Even the Dante selection, the one item known to be a quotation, is appropriate to what spiritualists regard as the blundering progress of psychic research. The Swedish phrase is not out of place in the seance room. Most of the other writings suggest strongly that the intelligence that put them down knew what they meant. But the mediumship in general is objective, and we can well afford to let this subjective problem remain open in the hope that the answer to some of the objective ones will answer it.

CHAPTER VIII

MARGERY AND OTHER PSYCHICS

THE development of the trance gave opportunity for an interesting series of observations connecting Margery and Miss Scott, an acquaintance of several of the ABC group, who was herself a trance medium in an amateur way, and who occasionally attended Margery's sittings. Her first presence was on July 1, 1923. During the sitting she gave a little groan, and her head sank forward; and she did not hear the sound of the psychic music which was produced in the two-minute interval before she recovered. She had had no intent of going into trance, but it was taken for granted that that was what had happened to her.

While Miss Scott had this seizure, Margery herself was in trance. Later, with the circle joined and hands resting on the table, Miss Scott again was in trance for some minutes, while Margery was normal. The story is told with some relish how Margery, never having seen trance in the Lime Street room before, cried excitedly to the sitters: "Oh, look at Scotty! She's out!" On recovery, Miss Scott withdrew from the circle, and was not again entranced.

Miss Scott was again present on July 14, and asked Walter if her mother (deceased) could not speak through her, or through Margery. Walter's regular psychic was in trance at the moment; she awoke before Walter's promise to let Mrs. Scott in could be redeemed. Later in the evening, however, after Margery had again been in trance for a few moments, and had awakened, Miss Scott went under, and spoke in her mother's person. As she came out, Margery went in trance. Indeed, for the best part of the evening one or the other of these two was entranced, but never both at once.

On the fifteenth, "Scotty" was again present, and the curious alternating trance was more pronounced, but this time both were sometimes entranced at once. To give a complete statement: twice, early in the sitting, while Margery was in a prolonged trance, Miss Scott went out; then they alternated in trance, several times, one going under as the other came back; then the visitor went out three times while Margery remained normal; and finally they alternated several times more. The reason for all this excitement was stated to be a determined but unsuccessful attempt by Mrs. Caldwell and Mrs. Scott to communicate through Miss Scott.

Miss Scott's next presence was on August 4, and again there was interplay between the two psychics. Through the entranced Margery, Walter said that he would try Miss Scott; he left his sister, and there ensued several unsuccessful efforts to throw Miss Scott into trance. This state of affairs seemed to react upon Margery, and for a while he could not produce a satisfactory trance by either. Finally after rearranging the seating he got them both off at once. Walter spoke to the sitters through Margery, Mrs. Scott through her daughter. In addition, Walter, running the show, instructed Mrs. Scott how to proceed, when to start and stop talking, etc., using Margery's voice audibly to the sitters. I have heard two controls conversing audibly with one another by use of a single medium's vocal apparatus. But this is the first case I have heard of where two spirits have thus conversed audibly, each using his own medium. The whole idea of hearing two spirits talk was new to the sitters, and they got a prodigious kick out of it. Miss Scott came out first, when her mother was through talking; Walter stayed to say good night before releasing his own psychic.

Walter always seemed to think that Miss Scott's presence, while desirable in a general way, introduced complications which he had to meet before he could get any advantage out of her psychic powers. He always displayed the greatest

concern as to where she should sit, and sometimes required that two circles should be made, one with Margery in it and one with the other medium. In the presence of the Stewarts, one or both of whom seems to have some psychic power, he displays similar concern. It is an observed fact, however, that with Mrs. Stewart in the circle, Margery's phenomena have a far greater spatial range than ordinarily. Walter explains this by saying that Mrs. Stewart is just enough psychic to help him. If she were a really powerful medium she would bring her own control with her and there would be conflict between him and Walter, resulting in a poor seance or none at all; but as things lie, he is able to supersede her control entirely and use her powers in conjunction with Margery's.

Aleck Cross, as a result of the first few sittings in the ABC group, became completely converted to Spiritualism, and carried his new belief to ridiculous extremes. Every noise in the house, every little bit of good fortune which any of the group might experience, was Walter; and there was no arguing with him. On July 22, he got permission to bring to the Lime Street seance another medium whom he had discovered, who turned out to be a lady of such elephantine proportions that there was difficulty getting her upstairs to the seance room. The visitor went into what passed for a trance, scrawled illegible marks on a bit of paper, muttered incoherently, took off her beads and rattled them, but produced nothing of any interest or value. It was Margery's impression that the creature was a total fraud. Walter, interrogated next night, would not confirm this. He admitted that she had disturbed his program and prevented him from doing what he had planned; but he insisted that while she was a different sort from him and his sitters, she was all right in her place. The next chapter will, in fact, relate an incident of this seance which suggests the use of psychic power contributed by the visitor.

CHAPTER IX

THE PSYCHIC MUSIC

DURING the sitting of June 10, it was agreed that the next session should be on the seventeenth. Using the trance voice, Walter then said that he and Uncle Elliott (Admiral Pillsbury; see Chapter LIII) had arranged to put something through on that date that would leave no shadow of doubt. It was something never done before, very difficult, and it would tire Margery; but it would be an amazing performance. Many on his side would be there to see it.

When the seventeenth came, Walter made good on this promise, starting a new phase of the mediumship which lasted for some months. He first asked F. H. whether he remembered his Uncle Elliott's funeral; and being answered in the affirmative, he inquired what feature had been particularly impressive. F. H., in answer to this, named the playing of Taps at the grave. "Your Uncle Elliott stood beside you there, as you listened," rejoined Walter.

After a considerable pause, without any direct statement of his intentions, Walter then went on: "Have everyone here join hands in a circle; don't break the circle on any account. This has never been done before. I shall have to go away from the Kid (his usual name for his sister, both in life and in the seance room) and leave her alone in the trance, in order to do it. Listen and have patience; we have to have plenty of it over here." Then, after a brief pause, he gave instructions for changing the circle in such fashion that sitters whom he recognized as strong should alternate with those whom he regarded as weak.

The rearrangement effected, there was absolute silence

for twenty-eight minutes. The red light was on, and the psychic's head could be seen, bent forward as though she were asleep. She was quite motionless, and all the rest were as nearly so as humanly possible. Perhaps if Margery had not been in trance they would have got discouraged and given it up; but they were thoroughly impressed with the serious nature of trance, the necessity of not interfering with it, the vital urgency that they permit it to terminate of itself. They would have remained *in statu quo* for hours, if the trance had lasted so long!

At the end of the interval named, the entranced psychic raised her head with a triumphant smile, and squeezed the hands of those beside her. At this instant there sounded the notes of Taps, "as on a bell so pure as to bear no vibration—almost as though breathed out without the use of an instrument." All present heard this, save one who is deaf. Margery came out of trance at once.

The sitters could reach no absolute agreement as to the point from which the sound came. Most of them described it as seeming to originate a short distance down the stairs. They were unanimous that it came from outside the room. Walter said, when queried, that he had used no instrument in the house. The dinner gong, the chime-rods of the grandfather's clock in the hall, etc., were all tried out, and came nowhere near the correct effect.

The reader will appreciate that if this happened to him, in his own house or in one with which he was familiar, with only friends of long standing present, he would not put such value upon the outstanding physical possibilities of fraud as he does when it happens in Lime Street. But granting this, the reader who does not know the Lime Street house or the Lime Street sitters ought not to be asked to accept the incident without verification beyond that which the record gives it. If we discard any confidence in the good intentions of those present, there was really very little security against the use of a con-

cealed instrument, which might have been set to operate automatically or might have been manipulated by a confederate. The investigator would, of course, wish to postpone his hunt for a source of fraud or for a confederate until he had had more experience with the phenomenon, and he would hope that such further experience would tend to reduce the apparent possible locus of fraud. Perhaps the reader will be willing to wait, with the investigator.

With McDougall and Roback present on July 1, there was a repetition of the Taps. Almost immediately on sitting down, Margery was entranced; she remained silent for five minutes, after which Walter's voice asked the sitters to join hands in a circle. After another silence of about ten minutes, Margery raised her head as before, and all present save Miss Scott, who was herself apparently in trance, heard the Taps sounded, "in the most exquisitely pure tones, quite beyond description, as though on chimes, but not struck on any instrument." There was light at the time. To all except Roback the sound seemed to come from downstairs, though from no great distance; Roback's specific impression is not recorded. The dinner gong was this time in the seance room, on the mantel; and the sounds certainly did not come from it.

The Taps performance was had for the third time on July 15. Miss Scott was present, and there had been much experimenting with seating arrangements, in part at least under Walter's direction. Two circles had been tried, one for each of the psychics, and there had been a return to the single large circle. "Don't break it," cautioned Walter; and Margery went into what seemed to be a deeper trance than usual. After twelve minutes of this trance, the sitters maintaining silence as before, the music was heard, very clearly, giving the same impression of source and character as previously.

After the initial rendering of Taps on June 17, there had been, throughout the rest of June and the early part of July, a great deal of talk with Walter about this and other promised

musical phenomena. On June 24, as indicated elsewhere, there had been much confusion and shifting about of the sitters. It was not clear during this period what Walter was trying to do; but after the seance had got running smoothly, he said, with trance voice:

"Too bad—too bad about that little boy of Mrs. Richardson's. He wanted to play the piano and he couldn't do it. And he wanted me to do it for him, and I couldn't. He was disappointed. But you broke the circle three times." Mark and John had on this evening for the first time been included in the spirit census. No indication appeared whether Walter had reference to psychic playing of a material piano, or to piano music of wholly psychic character, played without any material instrument. The incident was referred to again on June 30, with the promise, "But he'll do it yet; he'll do it"; and on July 15, Walter repeated that John wanted to play the piano, and that he would do it yet.

On July 22 he did it. There was complete darkness, with Margery in trance. Walter said John was there and would try to play the piano. A circle was formed, and silence was preserved for about twelve minutes, at which point four notes as on a piano were heard by five of the twelve sitters. They were in the general style of notes struck successively by a single finger, but they made a valid harmony. So far as could be judged by those who heard them they were much too close to have come from the only piano in the house, located on the ground floor, three flights below the seance room.

On the following evening Walter said that John would be able to give the piano performance again if the sitters would join hands and not break the circle or the silence. They did so, and after about five minutes got six notes, very similar in every way to those of the preceding night. There was trance; the record does not mention the light. All the sitters heard this rendition of the psychic piano, and the verdict was more decided that the sounds could not have come from the ground

floor. As with the Taps, Walter appears never to have made any specific statement of their alleged source.

Promising big things for the next night, Walter, on July 21, without giving any names, had referred to three war-time friends of Caldwell, who had served most of the war as a dentist attached to the British forces. July 22 was the date on which Cross brought his mediumistic friend of uncertain standing. The psychic music, up to now and for some time hereafter, came regularly only with Margery in trance. But the present occasion furnished an exception; for at a moment when Margery was normal but the visitor was in trance, there was heard distinctly, as from a bugle, some distance off, the English Call to Arms. It was repeated after a little, the record not making it clear which psychic, if either, was in trance this time.

Apparently the full connection between Caldwell's three friends and the psychic bugle call was not at once established. On July 28, Caldwell asked for their names, and another spirit, according to Walter, urged that these be not given. On August 4, Caldwell asked Walter if he would not write the names; and Walter said that perhaps he would, some night when the three were there. In some way which the records do not make clear, the three friends were ultimately located, but not personally identified, as three bugle boys with whom Caldwell had had associations while in the service; and the claim was specifically put forward that all the psychic bugle calls (see below) were rendered by them, on non-material instruments.

This claim was partly formulated in the seance of July 29. There was a prolonged trance; and after the ordinary trance talk had ceased a circle was formed. No statement appears about the light. In about eight minutes the Taps was played very clearly, corresponding to the several previous performances. After this, and hence separating the Taps from the bugle in the scheme of seance philosophy, Walter

said, "Here come your boys." Within three minutes or so, the British Call to Arms was heard distinctly, "as on a bugle at a great distance and in an open space." Presently Walter said they were going to play again, and they did, this time giving the British Reveille, very clearly, and distinctly as though on three bugles.

On July 30, for the first time, psychic music was produced without the aid of trance. After considerable conversation through the table, Walter said that Clark wanted to play the piano—presumably the same one on which John had previously performed! The sitters waited for about eight minutes, and, realizing that music without trance was something new, they had about given it up, when it came—taps brilliantly played in the treble, very loudly and distinctly. Walter indicated that he and Clark had done it together.

The next musical performance involved a relapse to the trance technique. On August 2, after a silence of eight minutes, which I judge constituted an effort to get music without trance, Margery went out. All hands had been on the table, and remained so in the ensuing silence of five minutes. Then Walter spoke and said he found conditions difficult tonight (the presence of the incurably skeptical D. G. C. was sufficient to account for this to the other sitters), and asked that they join hands. Before they had time to do so, they heard the Taps as before, sounding as though on chimes of some sort. It was played this time with unusual deliberation, very loud and distinct.

Again, on September 9, psychic music was obtained without trance. This time there was no preliminary silence or warning of any description; the English Call to Arms burst out, to be followed by Taps. The latter, like the former, seemed to be on a bugle—the first time Taps had been so rendered.

The musical performance of September 23 was attributed by Walter to two of Caldwell's bugle-boys; and to the ear it

involved two bugles. The British Last Post was given first, and then Taps, American style.

September 30 brought forth two new items, one more or less definitely promised, the other a surprise. Walter had said he would play a mouth-organ for them some time; the instrument was heard, shortly after the start, giving two or three faint notes. When the record of October 7 refers to "Walter's call on the harmonica," without further details or description, it is dealing with the same phenomenon. The implication of a familiar tune must have been borrowed from the whistling voice which I describe in another place; the mouth-organ was heard only on these two occasions.

To his other innovation of September 30 Walter soon attached the name "celestial clock." There is a church just around the corner from the Lime Street house, which boasts a clock that chimes the hours very attractively. At ten o'clock on this evening, immediately after the church clock had done its duty, ten more strokes were heard, of different character from any clock known to be in the house or the neighborhood, like a soft chime. The general effect was as though it might be in the next house, but its failure to strike any other hour so that it could be heard in Number 10 would rule out the easy explanation on this basis. There was red light in the seance room at the moment.

Walter said that he would give the celestial clock every night they sat, at ten o'clock; and on October 6 he made good. On the seventh it was also given, but indistinctly. On the fourteenth it was heard very clearly by all. On the eighteenth, in place of the celestial clock Walter gave his "wee watchie"—four strokes on a bell or a gong, apparently in emulation of ship's time. This variation was not an accident, for immediately before the sound was heard Walter said: "Listen to my wee watchie." On the twentieth both the celestial clock and the wee watchie performed. On November 3, as described in the full record of this sitting (see Chapter XVI), the celestial

clock was given under unusually good conditions. The record describes the effect "as on soft musical instrument or chimes," and estimates the lapse of time between the church clock's striking and that of Walter's instrument to have been about one full minute. After this, the records indicate only one further manifestation under this head; the celestial clock was heard, in my presence, on November 15.

In addition to the harmonica call just chronicled, the sitting of October 7 saw a repetition of the performance of July 30, the Taps harmony being heard, distinctly as on a piano and distinctly as though from below. On this occasion as before it came after a definite announcement and a wait.

October 20 brought out a new noise, not especially musical, but listed here in default of a better place. Walter, with a grim humor which is quite characteristic, called it the rattling of his chains. It sounded to some sitters like the jingling of glass, to others like the squeak of automobile brakes. I imagine it was given on other occasions without getting into the record, because I have heard it spoken of as the "clanking" of Walter's chains, and I know it was quite a by-word of the seance room at one time.

The three bugle boys were heard at four different points during this seance, one or two of their calls being new ones. All this came after the group had been downstairs at Walter's orders and had come back to the seance room. This is apparently the last of the bugle boys.

In the presence of the Harvard investigators on November 3, and after an examination and sealing of the premises which seemed adequate to rule out all possibility of confederacy on the lower stories, Walter said that Taps would be attempted. After about ten minutes of waiting it came, without trance, as in the case of all these later musical incidents. It corresponded to the earlier versions of the tune rather than the more recent ones, in that it seemed to be on chimes rather than a bugle or a piano.

There was a musical number on November 4 which led to some disagreement among the sitters. Walter first announced it as a performance by Clark, on the jew's-harp; a little later he spoke of it as though it were to be on a psychic piano. There was considerable delay, with no sounds at all, while Walter remarked that Clark was always late. (I believe in life he was about as undependable as well could be.) Walter kept on chatting, and presently the music came. Mrs. Richardson likened it to a running of fingers across the strings inside a piano. F. H. heard it as a perfect jew's-harp tone, three notes being struck; he placed it in the room, between the windows. The suggestion is made that Mrs. Richardson drew upon a more familiar simile than the jew's-harp, for what was in reality perfectly well described in terms of that instrument. Mrs. Richardson and some of the other sitters, if not all, made the observation that these notes, coming while Walter was speaking, actually coincided with his voice. The record fails to indicate what measures of hand and foot control, etc., were in effect on this occasion, but to make this point of any consequence we must dispute F. H.'s localization of the music.

During the largely unsuccessful sitting of November 15, in my presence, Taps (with the chime effect) was obtained as well as the celestial clock mentioned above. This marked the end of the musical phenomena. No specific reason for their abandonment was ever asked of Walter or volunteered by him. None, in fact, was necessary; the dropping of the music was a perfectly natural development. The disturbing incidents of my visit, followed by the trip abroad, might well have been sufficient to suspend this phenomenon for the time. And on the return from Europe, new conditions, new viewpoints and a whole new array of sitters turned the mediumship into a wholly new channel. Whatever else might be said in summary here is said at the end of Chapter XVI.

CHAPTER X

"THE GOBBLE-UNS 'LL GIT YOU EF YOU DON'T WATCH OUT"

DURING the sitting of June 23, after Walter had undertaken to levitate the table if he found that he could, and while he was presumed to be working upon this problem, Brown and Adler, sitting next the psychic on her either side, and probably having some degree of contact with her hands on the table, declared that they felt cold, tingling sensations in their forearms. F. H. at the same time observed, projected from the region of her fingers, what he described as faint, aurora-like emanations. I am confident that this was in red light, though the record is silent. This would constitute a valid explanation of how F. H. could see what the other sitters missed. The visibility of the faintly luminous objects, psychic and otherwise, in the dark seance room is uncertain in some small degree; in red light it depends very largely upon such accidental factors as the extent to which one has a dark background against which to look.

Margery herself reports the next item which finds a place in this chapter. She was walking along the street in Bar Harbor, on the morning of July 9, when she suddenly stopped and said to herself: "Why, there's Walter." She thought that if Mrs. Brown and Laura C., her companions on the motor trip which had taken her into Maine, were only with her at the moment, they could see what Walter had looked like. He took off his hat, ran his hand through his hair, and was gone. Margery appears to have realized, even while the experience was in course, that Walter could not be present in the body and that the sight of him must be a psychic item of some sort. My own preference would be to rank it as subjective, and to infer that

if the other ladies had been there they would have seen nothing. The account is of course unverified, but I know no reason why we should refuse to regard it as a probably valid though wholly unprovable apparition.

Sitting at F. H.'s summer cottage on the beach at Winthrop, on August 5, there was present one Dr. T., who is credited with clairvoyant powers. Walter was relaying messages by the use of the trance voice, when Dr. T. asked him whether there were not a spirit standing at F. H.'s left. On Walter's assenting, Dr. T. gave what several sitters recognized as a valid description of one of the spirits named in the census, a Mr. Waldo. One is left to make one's own assumption that Dr. T. had not been acquainted with Waldo during the latter's life. Following this spontaneous vision by Dr. T., Walter agreed to try to make him see others of the spirit group. For this purpose he arranged all the sitters very carefully; he did likewise with the electric lamp, ultimately experimenting some with this, turning it alternately off and on, with the explanation that he did not know which way would be most advantageous for clairvoyance. Told by Walter where Clark was standing, Dr. T. at first saw nothing, then made out the outline of a faintly phosphorescent figure in the designated place. With F. H.'s grandmother, several failures, in light and in darkness, preceded Dr. T.'s successful effort to visualize her.

All this was reminiscent of July 29, when Mrs. Mackie, one of the sitters, spontaneously developed a supposedly clairvoyant impression of one of the controls who was communicating through the table at the moment. Walter was never asked to verify Mrs. Mackie's experience; on August 11, the question was put to him whether Dr. T. had really seen some of the spirit visitors. He replied that it was really very hard for him to tell what the sitters saw and what they did not see; he thought it probable that Dr. T. had seen spirits, but he would not commit himself to the proposition.

Dr. T., in spite of his clairvoyance, left the ABC group cold. He had been asked by Walter whether he would join the circle permanently; he was the type that aids materialization. He replied rather uninterestedly that he might, if he saw any value in it. He was present only once again, on August 19; and whether because of the contribution made by his presence or not, there was here considerable seeing by various sitters of things that were not there in material terms.

Margery started this by seeing a brilliant light on the table, at a moment when hands were being held in circle, six to ten inches from the table. Walter was asked whether he made the light, and claimed it. Margery heard a voice, so she thought, and Walter was asked about this, too. There was no audible reply, either by voice or by table; but all the sitters at once saw a shaft of light, three to five feet in length, coming from the southwest corner of the room where there is no window, and twice giving three flashes.

At this moment or later, Dr. T.'s clairvoyant powers revealed to him three faces, a dark man and two women. Walter was asked whether he could materialize them so that all present might see; he didn't know but would try. Apparently *nothing came of his efforts.*

Still later in the evening, at a moment when the Crawford control was talking, very sparingly, with what was taken to be independent voice (the second experience of this sort), Margery, not in trance, exclaimed that she felt a cold grip on the back of her neck. Ducking forward, she encountered a similar hold on her chin, followed by a feeling as of hair, somewhat scented, falling over her face. During this period she exclaimed over the coldness of the cabinet; Cross's hands were observed by his neighbors to be extremely cold and clammy; and presently Aleck developed an attack of hysterics—something to which he was rather prone when the suggested presence of the spirits took a more material turn than usual.

This series of contacts reported by the psychic herself comes

from the quarter in which one looks for any fraud that may be thought to mark the case. It stood alone for some time, but on November 11, sitting at the inn in Andover, Mass., it was duplicated; and as will be seen from the quotation which I make out of the record, there was, intentionally or accidentally, enough light this time to permit decent visibility:

"At about this time, Mrs. Stewart said that she saw a shadowy outline between the psychic and Mr. Stewart, Sr. Shortly after, Mr. Stewart, Sr., declared that he felt a hand take hold of his right forearm; but at the time all our hands were clearly seen to be clasped in the circle. A moment later Mrs. Stewart, who was sitting two feet back and outside the circle, had her chair pushed violently forward about two feet into the circle, at which Walter laughed with great amusement." The obvious ambiguity about hands is to be regretted; the failure of the record to cover Mrs. Stewart detracts seriously from what would otherwise have been one of the most impressive incidents of the entire 1923 history of Margery's mediumship.

Ultimately the mediumship reached a stage where the psychic touches and psychic lights of the present chapter were epidemic. I think we should regard the incidents here related as a forecast of what was later to happen regularly. These incidents are wholly isolated so far as the course of events for 1923 is concerned, but most of them point distinctly forward. And when we get, under valid conditions of control, the same sort of surprising manifestations as these, every presumption of genuineness is thrown back upon the items here catalogued.

CHAPTER XI

WALTER'S VOICE

THE passage into and out of trance whenever it was desired to hold extensive converse with Walter was a good deal of a nuisance; and F. H. had his mind set toward a state of affairs when this should be no longer necessary. He first broached the matter to Walter on July 4, 1923. He asked whether it would not ultimately be possible to communicate through independent voice; Walter, using the table, indicated that he would try to work in that direction. Some idea was got across to the general effect that it would be necessary to try it five times. Then the table became still, and all present heard a voice, more like a soft formless blowing at first, then becoming sibilant, finally articulating a sound which all agreed was a whispered "Yes." This was repeated from seven to ten times. Laura C., Adler and Margery placed this whisper behind the psychic's chair; F. H. located it in the corner of the room. Walter, asked whether it was he who spoke, quickly answered "yes" with the table.

Vocal communication fell back into the trance technique following this episode, and no further stimulus was given toward independent voice. But on August 19 it recurred spontaneously. The Crawford control had appeared and identified itself with the table. It then spoke several times, without trance, saying "yes," "no" and "good night." The "yes" was very sibilant, as a whispered "yes" is apt to be; the "no," too, seemed breathed out. The "good night," though whispered, was distinct. This whispering was preceded by two distinct whistles, coming singly; then by a whistled bar from the Trumpeter tune which at this stage was one of the Victrola

records in use. There is no statement whether this came to the accompaniment of the music, but I infer that, as was usually the case later on, when the whistling developed into a steady performance, it did so.

Again on September 9 there was voice without trance. After an interval of silence, entered on at Walter's request and lasting some ten minutes, all sitters heard the name Lord distinctly whispered. After the visitor had been located through the table as Mrs. Richardson's father, the whisper continued long enough to support a brief conversation; then a few more words were whispered from John and Mark to their mother. All this was in complete darkness; and no observations of the apparent source of the voice are recorded.

After skipping one sitting, the tranceless voice came back to stay on September 22, being "heard with greater tone and distinctness than ever before." The record quotes seven remarks, two of them quite lengthy, made through this technique. On one occasion Margery was speaking at the same time with Walter.

The record for September 23 starts with the statement, "Walter came alone, and quickly began to communicate by direct voice and with increasing distinctness." Here and hereafter, no attempt was made to perpetuate everything said in this way. On the present date, in addition to a considerable amount of conversation, Walter twice whistled. During the sitting, Margery had to go downstairs to smooth out her young son's nightmare. While she was gone, the others heard the whistle coming from below; on her return, she insisted that she had heard it from above. Accepting her observation would apparently put it somewhere on the stairs, in accord with many future observations. Mrs. Richardson's father again spoke to her in direct voice; the record does not indicate whether his speech was different from Walter's. Margery's recollection agrees with my judgment that all this took place in the dark, but no specific statement is made.

On September 28, in red light, Walter's whistle was heard six times, first apparently from the cabinet, then apparently from the windows. No record having been made of who was present, I cannot estimate the probability that the immobility of Margery's lips was observed or this observation attempted; but the absence of the point from the record presumably means that it was not made with brilliant success. It would be a difficult one, at best, with Margery in the shadows of the cabinet.

The light was then put out, and the whispering voice started to speak freely. Numerous statements regarding the alleged conditions of Walter's life and work on the other side were made; and so far as I can judge, he was far more fluent than he had ever been before in this technique. I should be inclined to pick this seance as marking the definite establishment of the direct voice as a means of communication of serviceability equal to that shown by the trance technique. A long seance was given over entirely to this conversation with Walter.

Again on the thirtieth, in red light, Walter's greeting whistle was heard several times. Later, in the dark, there were whispered remarks by him and by other controls. These whispers were located in various places inside the cabinet and out, but with no great agreement among the various sitters. All who heard them, however, insisted that there was a marked difference between the whispers credited to Walter and those attributed to the other controls.

The record for October 6 says, "Walter began to speak and we put out the light." This became regular procedure about this time. In red light, at the start, Walter would whistle a greeting (usually) and whisper a few words; then the light would go out and he would commence to talk freely. On the present occasion Walter was very fluent, and made many statements, at much length, about his existence and the technique of his phenomena. On one occasion, at least two

sitters were positive that he spoke while Margery was yawning audibly. Coincidence between Walter's speech and Margery's yawn or laugh is fairly frequent; I question that her *words* and his have ever fallen together in my presence.

It was agreed that the speech here was the most distinct that Walter had yet produced. It was audible for the most part to all the sitters, whereas always before, and usually since, right down to the present, F. H. had to repeat what Walter said, he with his ear in the cabinet being the only one who can make it out. There was a good deal of whistling, which here for the first time was interspersed through the talk rather than concentrated at the start. Once, the tune "Sweet Afton" having been mentioned, Walter whistled part of this. This whistling in the cabinet, in the midst of the talking, was stated to be quite different from the relatively distant whistling of his regular greeting call. In the cabinet it was a sort of whispered whistle, akin to his speech.

Whistling on October 7 is characterized as "the best we have had." Direct speech was not so continuous as last night, but was plentiful.

The record for the eleventh, following that of the sixth, states unmistakably that after the usual greeting with the table, Walter started to speak in the red light, with the psychic only partly in the cabinet. There is a stronger presumption here than at any previous time, that motion of Margery's mouth would have been looked for, and might have been observed if it had taken place. As soon as the presence of the voice was well established, the light was dispensed with. She had taken gas at the dentist's that morning, and her face and mouth were still sore. This appeared to be a handicap; Walter several times remarked that the Kid was sick or abnormal; she had taken some new chemical into her system, which puzzled him as to how best to deal with it. In spite of this, however, he gave a long talk. The spoken "good night" that ended the sitting came in red light while the group was

on the lower floor in pursuit of an experiment (Chapter XV).

During a half-hour's conversation on October 12, Walter's whisper twice broke into actual voice. Again on the thirteenth, there was constant talk—this time, nothing else. On the fourteenth Walter whistled and talked; and several times, when asked to repeat a remark that had not been heard, he did so in a very loud whisper, almost vocal. I suggest that this is a very strong psychological indication of genuineness. When one is asked to repeat, one's tendency is to speak louder than the first time. I am very certain that, if the whispering personality had anything to conceal, it would conquer this tendency and give the repetition in the same tone as the original remark. Most psychological arguments in favor of validity impress me little, my feeling being that Margery is smart enough to outguess the observer if she were inclined toward fraud; but the present one I advance with a good deal of confidence.

The whispering voice had by now become such a part of the seance routine that efforts were felt to be in order to determine its exact character, while some degree of confidence was held that this could be done without inhibiting its manifestation. The belief of some, at least, of the psychologists from Harvard was that the voice was conscious fraud on Margery's part. Others, including perhaps some of the regular sitters, were inclined to regard it as an automatism, analogous to that of the hand in automatic writing. And still others were confident that it would be found to have its locus in space, outside the psychic's physical organism—constituting in all senses an objective psychic phenomenon.

A test of these hypotheses was made on October 18, which so far as conclusions could be drawn from it indicated the validity of the last-named alternative. The whistle preceded the voice, as usual; when the latter was well established the experiment was made. The psychic filled her mouth with water; whereupon Walter was heard to exclaim, "Well, well,

well!" The trial was repeated several times; the first time the Walter whisper seemed muffled; later the words came clear and distinct. The red light was used when Margery filled her mouth, but for some reason not when she emptied it again. Walter criticized this procedure, pointing out that the return of the correct volume of water was highly important; and also that its premature return, freeing the mouth for the test, must be guarded against. Since his suggestion was not followed, one would have to accept this particular test with reservations; but it is exceedingly interesting to find Walter picking holes in the proof of his own validity.

At the end of this sitting, Walter said: "Be silent, and I will see how loud I can speak." A tremendous effort was made and he almost broke into vocalization. The effect was very curious, says the report, with just the beginnings of vocal sounds.

The nineteenth saw free converse with Walter, as usual. On the twentieth there was a bit of talking, and a whistle or two. After the company had gone downstairs in accordance with the routine of this period (see Chapter XV), Walter whistled an obligato to the Victrola tune, this being his most elaborate performance of whistling to date. On the twenty-second, the record for the first time indicates that the whistling voice ordinarily gave a series of notes (five in number) from the "Souvenir" tune which was Walter's favorite. At the time of my first visit in November this had become standardized. We may assume that almost invariably, at this stage, when the whistled greeting is mentioned or the whistling of an accompaniment to the Victrola figures in the record, it is this snatch of music that is involved.

The whispering voice was heard from the cabinet on the twenty-second, partly in red light and partly in darkness. The voice was again a feature of the sitting of October 25. On the twenty-sixth the record for the first time mentions a vocal laugh from Walter, as distinguished from the former tech-

nique of laughing by circular shivering of the table. This came to be another standard feature, and is so yet. On the present occasion, Walter seemed decidedly anxious to display the new accomplishment; for the first half-hour nothing was given at all save this jeering laugh, every three or four minutes. Finally it was dropped and the voice came through.

During the afternoon of October 25, in the ordinary course of the household life, there occurred what were taken to be psychic manifestations. These were accompanied by vocal phenomena; but for greater coherence the latter are described with the former in Chapter XIV. During the seance of this date, Walter whistled a very elaborate accompaniment to a new Victrola record. This expression, of course, here as elsewhere, refers only to a few notes of the music.

Using the direct voice, Walter, on October 27, made a lot of sport of scientists and scientific viewpoints. On the twenty-eighth, the voice was unusually distinct. During this sitting, the voice several times withdrew for quite an interval, refusing to answer questions or to manifest in any other way. During these intervals unaccountable noises were heard downstairs, and investigation disclosed that furniture had been moved about on the ground floor. Walter claimed that it had been done supernormally, but not by him.

Another novelty of this date concerned the whistling voice. Walter gave his familiar call from "Souvenir," downstairs; and he was answered by a repetition of the call from above. He said later that the echo came from John, and the record recites that the difference between the two performances was about what would be expected if one whistler were expert and the other an inexperienced imitator. It is to be regretted that the scribe did not regard it as of equal importance to chronicle the distribution of the sitters in the house at the moment.

The sitting of November 1 was marked by much use of the whispering voice. The experiment of October 14 had been made by the ABC group, in anticipation of the presence of

the Harvard investigators and its repetition by them. This repetition took place on the present occasion.

With the psychic only partly in the cabinet and with dim red light, the "Souvenir" whistle was heard, apparently from the lower part of the house. The psychic then retired within the cabinet, and a chuckling was heard, which the regulars, of course, attributed to Walter's satisfaction at the success of his whistled greeting. He then instructed that the experiment with the water be gone through with. I quote the record here, noting with regret that it gives no information about the degree of lighting, or the moments at which the light was had.

"The control told all present to put water in their mouths and the voices would still come from the cabinet. This was done, and the words 'well, well' and 'good' came very distinctly. No member of the group was able to utter a sound while retaining the water, save Roback, who succeeded in uttering one word quite clearly, but with manifest effort. Then all showed that the water was still in their mouths, after the experiment, by ejecting it in full view of the others. [This, of course, implies beyond question that there was light at the moment of ejection.] The test was later repeated by the psychic alone, and conversation was carried on [by the whispering voice] while her mouth contained water, which was afterwards measured in a glass" [and found to be the full amount taken in].

On November 3, in the presence of the Harvard group and under the most severe conditions of attempted exclusion of possibilities of fraud to which the mediumship had yet been exposed, the vocal routine was gone through with as usual. This sitting is given in full elsewhere, so I omit details here. November 4, according to Walter, was a social evening, given over to relaxation from the expressed and implied suspicions of the night before; and he spent most of his time in conversation, using the direct voice entirely. Seven different controls spoke briefly, some making themselves better understood than others;

all others were less distinct than Walter, and none, save him, spoke more than a few words. Much the same thing happened on the sixth; and November 8, too, saw nothing at all but conversation, Walter expressing desire to conserve his energies against my visit, scheduled to start on the fifteenth.

On November 11, in strange surroundings, with strange cabinet, having no curtain in front or at the top, Walter gave vocal greetings and conversation quite as freely as in his own Lime Street premises. The complete correspondence between the action of this sitting and that usually got in Lime Street went a long way toward disposing of the thought that there was confederacy from without the seance room; although so far as this sitting was concerned, such theory could still be maintained regarding the whistling, which was here absent.

During my visit, as detailed in Chapter XVII, Walter found his program seriously interfered with by an invading personality of apparently evil intent. On the fifteenth, there was a very little of the direct voice, and some "Souvenir" whistling which impressed me as the best feature of the performance. It was given several times, starting at a point apparently remote, downstairs, and with each repetition advancing toward the seance room. It was perfectly apparent that it was either genuine or due to confederacy outside the room. Physical phenomena were weak or wholly absent; and when Walter wanted to put over an extended talk, he threw his sister into trance, this being the first time in many weeks that trance had been a serious part of the program.

On the sixteenth and seventeenth, with the exception of the whispered warning to break up (page 117), the voice failed entirely during my presence in the seance room, not even succeeding in putting the whistling across. But on one of these evenings, as we sat at the dinner table, we heard the "Souvenir" melody very clearly whistled from upstairs. Several of the intended sitters of the evening who were not among the dinner guests had arrived, and I could not be certain of my own

knowledge that none had gone upstairs; and there was still the potential, unidentified, habitual household confederate to be disposed of. On the seventeenth, when I found a pretext for withdrawing temporarily, the voice came through in my absence, in the usual way without trance, and talked freely. But on the eighteenth again, in my presence, it was once more missing.

On November 20, two sittings were held—one at the Harvard Psychological Laboratory, which was a blank so far as vocal effects were concerned; and one by friendly sitters alone, on returning to Lime Street. There was the usual voice here, talking freely. On the twenty-second and twenty-fifth there was liberal talk and some whistling. Again, on the twenty-sixth, Walter's voice was present in its full strength; and on the twenty-eighth, after an interval of more than two hours, during which there appeared some ground for fear that an evil presence was interfering, Walter came through and talked for half an hour. And here we must suspend the history of the voice, to take it up again when we have brought Margery safely back from Europe.

CHAPTER XII

A SUMMARY TO DATE

We are now at the verge of a rather pronounced change in the procedure employed by the control during the seance; and by way of nailing down the progress which we have made, it seems advisable to give one or two of the seance records in full. For this purpose I have selected seances which are typical, the one of the course of events before the non-trance voice was developed, the other of the way the sittings ran after Walter acquired this tool. This will not merely show just how the seance ran, but will show well the contrast between the technique of June and that of August and September. At the same time I find it feasible to use, for the earlier-type seance, the one out of all the 1923 sittings for which independent records exist, from two sources. I shall give both, as an interesting study in the different angles from which different sitters viewed the proceedings. F. H.'s record of the seance of June 16 reads as follows:

"Fifth seance; June 16, 1923; Dr. Brown's house, 9.30 p.m.

"Present: Dr. and Mrs. Brown, Adler, Cross, Dr. Caldwell, Mr. and Mrs. Murray, Margery and F. H. Thirty-eight pound table used.

"Walter came quickly through the table, and with it carried on an intelligent yes-and-no conversation. We then asked for Mr. Clark, who came about a minute after the call. He expressed joy at Murray's presence by repeatedly moving the table toward him and climbing up on his lap.

"Walter, in reply to a question, said there were six present besides himself. They proved to be Mr. Clark, Mrs. Cald-

well, her two infant children, and Adler's mother. We could not get the sixth one, which came for F. H., though we named everybody we could think of. Fred's mother had considerable communication with him through the table.

"Walter then did a lot of plain raps for Murray, who used the stethoscope. Walter would not touch the tin pan. At 10.33 he took possession of the medium and talked through her, in his own person only, for seven minutes.

"He had one message, namely, that Margery's nephew in Canada had just had a boy born in his family. This was confirmed next day by arrival of the announcing letter.

"Walter then addressed F. H., saying that he and Uncle Elliott had arranged for the June 17 seance to get something through that would leave no shadow of doubt on our minds, though it would leave the Kid pretty tired. That what they would put through had never been done before; that it would be difficult; that many on their side would be there too."

One reason why I have selected this record for presentation in full is that it is *not* characteristic of the records made of most of the sittings, in that it does not give great details of the conversation with Walter and other controls. The record for August 4, for instance, runs to four closely typewritten pages, and ninety per cent of it is verbatim transcript of questions asked the spirits and answers received. This, of course, is interesting to many of us, but it is not part of my scheme to present any more of the sayings of the control than seem an integral part of the physical phenomena. The other record preserved from June 16 was drawn up by one of the other sitters, whose identity is not stated. It reads:

"Unusual psychic phenomena observed by nine people, June 16, 1923, at the home of Dr. Brown in Revere, Mass.; 9.30 p.m. Present: [The same list as above.]

"Circle was formed without contact with each other but with all finger-tips resting on a thirty-eight-pound varnished oak table. This group was now sitting for only the fifth time

in the experience of any of them. The fingers rested lightly on the table-top. An operator, Walter, brother of the psychic, who had passed over eleven years ago, who had had in his life table-tilting psychic power, now came quickly. With characteristic tilting he carried on an intelligent yes-and-no conversation for some time, and finally, in reply to a question, said there were six there besides himself. Five of these were identified by elimination; and several, through a table-tilting method, made considerable communication with different sitters. Sooner or later all sides of the table were tipped and with varying degrees of intensity. The light in the room was red.

"At 10.33 Walter took trance possession of the psychic and talked through her for seven minutes. He said that he had a message for the psychic herself, namely, that her nephew in Canada had just had a boy born into his family. This was confirmed next day by arrival of an announcing letter. Walter then addressed F. H., saying that he and Uncle Elliott, who was apparently the sixth operator present who had not been identified, . . ." [the record closes with almost an exact duplication of F. H.'s notes on what Walter and Uncle Elliott planned to do.]

The record for September 9, which I also present verbatim, includes one series of manifestations that take us forward into the next chapter; but it is the best record that I can find for the present purpose, so I ignore this objection and use it:

"Sitting at 10 Lime Street, September 9, 1923. Present: ABC group, Mr. and Mrs. Litzelmann, Dr. and Mrs. Richardson, Laura C.

"Walter came through the table, marked time to fox-trot music, which he emphatically preferred to more sedate or classical selections.

"There were nine with Walter, whom we identified as F. H.'s grandmother, his sister Nannie, Mrs. Adler, Mrs. Caldwell [mothers of sitters in both instances], Dr. Maurice Rich-

ardson [brother of a sitter], John and Mark Richardson, a friend of Mrs. Litzelmann named Ella Long, and one of Dr. Caldwell's bugle boys. Complete darkness.

"The psychic was in the cabinet. After levitation with and without contact, the cabinet moved back and forth quickly and from side to side, giving sudden and vehement jerks. The psychic's chair was also moved from side to side. We then heard knocks on one side of the cabinet, first as with a hand or finger nails, then as with a knee, heavy thuds. Then followed knocks on floor and table. Then the table made an excursion of about three feet and tipped up on end.

"We were silent for ten to fifteen minutes at Walter's request. There were eighteen raps on the cabinet. We did not find what this signified. We then heard a distinct whisper of the name "Lord." Assuming it to be her father, Mrs. Richardson asked for his first name, which none of the others save her husband knew. We heard several indistinct whispers, then ten raps. We assumed later that this must have meant the tenth letter of the alphabet. This was repeated several times, then there were more whispers. After many vain efforts to understand, we heard a distinct 'Joseph.' Then followed a short conversation between Mrs. Richardson and her father. She inquired about her two brothers and learned that they were not with her father. He then said: 'I love you. You were a brave girl. The children are all right.'

"After a few minutes of silence we heard another voice say, 'John. Father, father; I love you. Mother, mother. John is wonderful. Good night.'

"Suddenly we heard, very loudly and distinctly, a bugle play the English Call to Arms, followed by Taps. Shortly after this there came a loud whistle of a phrase of music of about seven notes.

"Walter said through the table that Ella Long would speak some time. Then he said 'Good night.'"

If I present this as a typical seance of the period, I ought

to make the confession that it is typical only in the physical direction. The "Mother, daughter, I love you" stuff is distinctly *not* typical of Margery's seances. Walter *never* talks that way; and when his assistants are heard from, they seldom do so. What they say need not be believed if you do not want to believe it, and it is seldom of attempted evidential character; but banal and trite it is, as a rule, distinctly not.

CHAPTER XIII

"RICHARDSON & STINSON, WRECKERS"

WITH new types of physical phenomena occurring from time to time, spontaneously, it stands to reason that sooner or later the cabinet itself, most prominent article of furniture in the seance room, will become the object of attention. Serious episodes of cabinet disturbance or even cabinet destruction came for the most part in the 1924 period of the mediumship, but enough of this sort of thing happened in 1923, in isolated instances, to demand segregation. The first example occurred on September 9.

Here, as always when the cabinet was played with by the psychic force, the medium was in it. After table levitation with and without hand contact, the cabinet moved quickly back and forth and from side to side, in sudden, vehement jerks. The psychic's chair was also moved violently from side to side, within the cabinet. This would appear to be properly classified with movement of the cabinet, whether we look upon the incident as genuine or as fraudulent. On either basis, we must regard the psychic's chair as giving the necessary fixed point for application of force to the cabinet; and if at the moment the latter happens to be better fixed than the former, the chair must move instead of the cabinet.

All this was in total darkness. There is no indication of the degree of control. I would hazard the guess that Margery's hands were held from her either side; her feet, at this period, certainly were not.

On September 23 in red light, six definite thumps were heard, "as of a hand striking the curtain pole" of the cabinet. With each blow the cabinet shook violently. Brown was sit-

ting in the cabinet with Margery, and I have no doubt that this implies hand control, though no explicit statement occurs. After the impacts described, the pole was suddenly dislodged from its place at the top of the cabinet, across the front; it fell within the cabinet, narrowly escaping Brown's head.

As originally constructed, the cabinet was designed to permit the dropping of the curtains in front, and the pole was present primarily in this connection. There was no initial suggestion that the pole would become the center of phenomena, and no special features of construction were embodied. After the present incident, it was altered so that it could not be dislodged from its seat by a mere spreading sideways of the cabinet walls. This was effected by adding small flanges to the ends of the pole, fitting into grooves in the sockets. While these flanges remained intact, the pole could be removed only by lifting it vertically until it was free.

The dropping of the pole, here due presumably to mere spreading of the cabinet, did not conclude the present demonstration. The left wing of the cabinet was forced backward, until it was ripped clear away from the back, nine screws being necessarily dislodged from their holes before the connection between side and back was wholly broken. The detached wing was first thrown up against the wall, then flat on its back on the floor.

Throughout this performance there was a satisfactory degree of red light. Brown, always the most difficult of the ABC group to convince of anything, was forced to accept this incident as genuine, and I believe it was the first time that he had found any single episode sufficiently clean-cut to stand on its own feet. No delicate finesse with hands or feet will disrupt the cabinet and throw the heavy detached wing away; a manifestation of this magnitude calls for action on a large scale. When it occurs in decent light, those present, if not those absent, are satisfied that the psychic could not have done it herself without their observation, that the same applies to

one another, and that no entry and escape of a confederate from without could have been made in such way as to evade detection.

On October 7, McDougall occupied the place in the cabinet with Margery which had been Brown's on the previous occasion. This time, with the flange added as described, the pole again came out and fell inside the cabinet. When two of the male sitters attempted to replace it, they found the greatest difficulty in doing so, forces which they could not identify resisting them strongly. The record, while going out of its way to specify that the rough stuff came only after repeated request, and that it seemed distasteful to Walter, says not a word about light conditions! McDougall verifies the memory of the others that there was red light. The cabinet was again broken up, just as it had been for Brown. The record is silent on the point, and McDougall expresses ignorance of it; but as members of the ABC group tell the story, the nine displaced screws were this time found, neatly piled in a corner of the room! This was attributed, by Walter, to Mark, and was extraordinarily characteristic; as a four-year-old, Mark used to follow his bigger brother about to pick up his toys.

Of all incidents of the 1923 history of the case, this one impresses me most. McDougall, inside the cabinet, could not himself testify that no confederate had entered; and Roback's position was apparently such as to prevent him from seeing the critical area as well as he would have wished. In addition, I am not sure but that the finding of the screws all in one place made them wonder whether part of the work of destruction had not been done beforehand, escaping such examination as they may have given. If we grant them the privilege of declining, on these grounds, to endorse the phenomenon as genuine, I think we must do so with the understanding that we are permitting them to stand up so straight that they are in grave danger of falling over backward.

The cabinet had been moved slightly on October 6, with-

out any tendency toward disruption. Again on the fourteenth, apparently at a moment when there were raps, kicks and scratches on it, it was moved about rather freely, without damage. "I will pull the pole out for you, in red light," said Walter; and he did so. Aside from this accidental item, conditions of control and of illumination are ignored by the record.

On October 18, apparently in the light but not certainly so, the cabinet moved, again while being rapped and scratched upon. The pole had not been seen to leave its seat, but the psychic noticed that it was out and stood up to replace it. Walter said he had done this to have it ready for F. H., and there was some chaffing here, F. H. objecting to having his glasses broken.

Yerxa was invited by Walter, on October 25, to come and put his head inside the cabinet. The pole was then disengaged and gently rapped his head. Nothing is said about the illumination, but it is obvious that the pole must have been under control from the instant it was freed, else it would have fallen sharply. There was some difficulty here, as once before, in replacing the pole.

With McDougall and Helson, who will be introduced in Chapter XVI, in control of Margery's hands but not of her feet, the cabinet on November 3 got several violent pushes that sent it toward McDougall and away from Helson. After this incident, the pole and the cabinet remained on their good behavior until, in the spring of 1924, they went completely crazy and thereby marked a rather distinct stage of the mediumship. We may therefore let them drop here, to pick them up again at the proper time.

CHAPTER XIV

WHO STOPPED THE CLOCKS?

LATE on the afternoon of October 25, F. H. came into the house from his professional routine, and found the clock in the book room stopped. He started it without noting its reading; then, later in the day, he was informed that at almost the same moment, around 5.15, the clocks in the hall and reception room had also stopped, "for the first time in their history." Margery and Cross had heard a peculiar sound, doubtless at the hour named, though on this the record is not specific; and they had traced it to one of these clocks. None of the three timepieces that failed was run down. During the sitting Walter admitted, under questioning, that this was his work. The celestial clock did not ring at ten o'clock, and he explained that to be perfectly fair he had stopped that, too.

Next night Walter sent Adler and Roback downstairs with a flashlight, to examine all the clocks and report back. They found all running in good order. After they had done this, Walter left at 11.15. Later examination showed the reception-room clock stopped at 10.54, nine minutes after the tour of inspection. Nothing could be said for either of these incidents that would meet the hypothesis of confederacy.

A little progress was made in the direction of security here on October 27. Adler and Margery were sent downstairs to stay five minutes; and on the way up they were to examine the clocks. They reported that all were running, and that the one in the hall, a large grandfather affair, was locked. I presume they left the key in the lock; the record does not state anything different. Fifteen minutes after this Walter left; and the hall

clock was then found stopped at 10.01, that in the reception room at 10.02.

The following night McDougall, Roback and F. H. were the last to leave the lower floor. McDougall, by his own wish, locked the doors of the hall clock and pocketed the key, to test Walter's ability as a meddler with clocks. He and F. H. alone were believed to know of this locking; but Walter charged them with it, and pretended to resent it as a trick played on him. He referred continually to it throughout the evening and ragged F. H. about it severely, despite the latter's apologies. No attempt was made to stop this or any other clock.

To make good for this, on November 1, Walter offered to stop the hall clock at an hour to be selected by the sitters. Ten was named; he objected to this as too soon (it was then 9.30), and 10.15 was substituted. Walter told Margery to go downstairs to observe the clocks, "with a friend"; Roback was suggested, and proved acceptable to Walter. They went down and noted time on the two clocks, which were five minutes apart. The hall clock has an elaborate chime, which gives four notes on the quarter hour; at 10.15 it was heard, but apparently was unfinished, giving but two or three notes. After the sitting, this clock was found stopped at exactly 10.15; and the one in the reception room at 9.55. Allowing for the slowness of the latter, it was pointed out that it had stopped at the hour first named. I find this incident leaning strongly toward genuineness.

Again, on November 3, but this time with no secrecy, McDougall locked the big hall clock and retained the key. At about ten o'clock Walter asked that an hour for stopping the clocks be named, but specified that he be given at least a half-hour's leeway. McDougall named the exact hour of 10.30, probably feeling that if the attempt were made to outguess him, he would be expected to give more than the half-hour asked for. Roback went downstairs with Margery, returning behind her; they reported that the hall and reception room

clocks were running. At the end, Helson and Roback went down first and found the hall clock stopped at exactly 10.30; and McDougall, in restoring the key to its place, found the doors still locked. My own gumshoeing in the house has satisfied me that there is but the one key, and that the Crandons know no way to pick the lock. The reception-room clock, unprotected, had likewise stopped at 10.30. The precautions taken at the commencement and at the ending of this seance were such, as will be seen from the complete account of the sitting given elsewhere, as to give a rather large guarantee of genuineness here.

CHAPTER XV

UPSTAIRS AND DOWN

THE use of the lower floors of the Lime Street house in connection with the seance phenomena was pretty definitely indicated by the observations, recorded in Chapter IX, of the apparent locus of the psychic music. Ranging of the mediumship over the whole house was put on a more definite basis on October 11. Early here, Walter rapped for silence, then stated that he intended to play the Victrola, downstairs on the ground floor. The circle was instructed to go down in the dark, at 9.32, holding hands en route; and to sit on the lowest steps of the stairs, nearest the instrument. Asked whether he wished a record put on the machine, he replied that he would attend to that. His instructions were misunderstood or carelessly disregarded: the hand holds were not maintained on the way down, nor was the circle maintained in completeness after it got down. When the group had sat on the stairs for a few moments the Victrola started to play, but stopped almost immediately. Nothing further came, until Walter's voice was heard ordering a return upstairs.

Back in the seance room, he informed his audience that the failure of the manifestation was due to their failure to keep the circle intact. He reiterated in detail the sequence of action he wanted them to pursue. Then, the occasion being a sort of dress rehearsal against an expected sitting with the Harvard group, he looked forward and gave instructions and advice for the performance with them. "You must put Brown on the step next the bottom—let him hold the Kid if he wants to. They will say she did it. But when he hears it play——!"

Next to Brown, he indicated that he most wanted to convince Roback.

Asked whether the experiment should be repeated that night, he said yes, and specified the hour of 10.15; but owing to the Kid's poor physical condition, he held out little hope of his being able to secure results. Nevertheless he insisted on their going downstairs, for the practice. He justified this by stating that once the Victrola manifestation was given, it would prove easier and easier—this indeed was the apparent fact with his phenomena in general. He drew a picture of the ultimate filling of the lower hall with eager listeners. "But the ones on the top step will not believe; they will say: 'We did not see it.' Don't sit like ramrods on the stairs," he went on to caution the company, "relax. Let the Kid giggle if she likes." This is a persistent failing of hers, and one that almost drives F. H. to distraction. She is in the habit of thanking Providence for her sense of humor, but her worse half insists that it is a misplaced one.

Finally the signal came to go downstairs. All filed down, holding hands, aided by occasional light from an electric torch, which Walter had said would be all right, provided they did not "fill the air with light." They sat for a time on the lower steps, but nothing happened.

For October 12, the group was instructed to go downstairs at precisely 9.32½ o'clock, in single file, connected by hands, in the dark save so far as they absolutely had to have the torch. Margery and Brown were to sit on the next to the bottom step; he did not want anyone on the actual floor of the lower story, lest he stumble over them. They were to form a "collapsed circle" thus on the stairs and he would play the Victrola.

These instructions were carried out to the letter; and sure enough, the Victrola started—"not with the usual preliminary of one or two buzzing blank circles of rotation, and not with the gradual screech of ascending speed, but commencing with full

speed, instantly, on the very beginning of the tune. Reaching the end of the record, it stopped on the last note, with extreme staccato effect."

Before going upstairs this evening, F. H. had placed the needle at the extreme outer edge of the record and wound the motor. "The automatic stop, however, was placed quite out of operative position, so that for both starting and stopping the instrument the hand lever must have been moved; and at the start the needle must have been placed with more than ordinary accuracy upon the already revolving disk." Following the stunt, Walter spoke a few words from the dining room, where there was no normal source of voice; then at the stroke of ten he said, "I must go now," and did so.

The sitters asked on October 14 for a repetition of the Victrola trick. Walter humorously set the time at 9.33 $\frac{1}{8}$, insisting that they be accurate. He told them to use the red flash if they wished; to sit on the floor if they wanted to, and he would step over them. As 9.30 approached he changed his time to 9.35 $\frac{1}{8}$.

The group went down in due course, all sitting or standing on the stairs near the Victrola. After a short wait it started to play. F. H. had put the record in place, set the needle at the outside rim, and so arranged the levers that the instrument would not stop itself save by running down. He had left the lid up, and it still stood so. In spite of all this the tune began, with only one or two preliminary revolutions, instead of a number; and it stopped a measure or two before the end. The red light was flashed over the Victrola several times during the performance, showing nothing. It was altogether improbable that Margery could have manipulated any threads which might have been attached, without discovery. Walter's voice ordered the group back upstairs, where he went on talking to them.

During this conversation, he discussed the philosophy of the going downstairs. This explanation was not made completely or clearly on any one occasion, but as ultimately put

together from Walter's remarks at different times, it came to about this: That he collected the force or the material (it was never wholly clear which) for these demonstrations from the sitters, rolled it up into a ball like soft snow, then spread it out down the stairs to render it sufficiently attenuated for use. If he had a circle he could get enough force, enough yarn, as he called it, for physical effects; if he had only the Kid, he couldn't. He said he sometimes ran around and around the backs of the chairs in the circle, as a means of bringing about the necessary stretching of the yarn; but attaching an end of it to the Kid and sending her downstairs was a more convenient way. The use of the word "yarn" here, and doubtless of others, admittedly constituted an attempt to put across, by analogy, ideas for which we on this side really have no words. Walter tacitly agreed to the conclusion formed by the sitters that his yarn and the conventional ectoplasm were attempts at formulation of the same concept.

On the eighteenth, without sending the sitters downstairs, Walter was credited by them with an attempt at the production of phenomena on the lower floors. He rapped for silence; for ten minutes nothing occurred. Then there were sounds as though somebody were trying to operate the Victrola on the ground floor. Walter later, in response to a direct question, said that this had been the case; but they had succeeded only in lifting the top of the instrument. Some of the sitters were inclined to verify this from the character of the sounds heard; and, on leaving the house, the visitors found the top raised. They testified that it was closed when they went upstairs to start the sitting. Walter gave permission for it to be locked thereafter.

October 19 saw the most complicated up-and-down-stairs technique yet attempted. Margery was instructed to go down three flights, alone; and to sit alone in the hall for seven and one-half minutes. Then the others were to go down two flights on the front stairs, the third flight on the back stairs, and to

sit on the dining-room table with feet on the floor. This they did; the record states, "Walter played the Victrola for us," and F. H., speaking from memory, interprets this as meaning that with a record previously placed on it by normal means, Walter started and stopped the instrument.

Later in the evening Walter instructed Margery to go down again, and to wait there for ten minutes. She was then to start the Victrola herself at the moment when the other sitters went down to the middle flight of stairs. After this she was to join the others, above, and Walter would play the record over and over again. This he made a definite effort to do, but at the end of the first run the needle was transferred to a point outside the beginning of the record, so that it caught in the felt of the bed, stalling the machine. A second attempt resulted similarly. The third time Walter instructed the Kid to go downstairs alone and wait fifteen minutes; then the others were to join her, this time in the dining room.

This was attempted, but while Margery was serving her solitary time, the man of all work, who slept in the house at that time, came home, found the door locked, and climbed in the window. After the uproar had died down, the experiment was resumed, and with success. The Victrola, started by the sitters, played the record over and over again, the documents failing to state how many repetitions of the tune it made; and the cow-bell hanging above it jingled in time with the music. Margery was standing eight feet from the machine while this went on. Repeaters were at this time on the market, but the Lime Street household had never heard of them. One can the more readily believe this, even from the detached standpoint of the reader, in view of the fact that the Victrola was started normally; the presence of a repeater must have been observed.

Immediately following this demonstration, before the sitters had returned upstairs, in plain sight of all, the piano stool from the small reception room of the ground floor, front, moved out of this room and across the corridor, covering a

measured distance of almost eight feet, and stopping at a point five feet from where Margery sat. This was the end, for that night.

On the twentieth, in a sitting that started late and lasted a major fraction of the night, Margery was sent downstairs at least six times. Sometimes she stayed for a stated time and then the others followed her; sometimes she came back and rejoined them in the seance room. Walter insisted that she remove her corset, stating that the stays interfered with his work; and for quite a time this bit of preparation for the seance on her part was routine. Three times in all the sitters were sent downstairs after her to the dining room. Twice there were no results; then, after more explicit instructions had been given and painstakingly followed, a third attack upon the problem brought success. Walter played the Victrola (whether he started and stopped it himself, or played it in repetition after it was started for him, is not specified); and when he got it going he whistled a "distinguished obligato" to the tune.

Again on October 25, the psychic was sent downstairs, and the others were told to follow in seven minutes. This they did, gathering in the dining room while she sat in the adjoining hall, alone, but in view and well out of reach of the Victrola. A different record had been mounted; presently it played, and when the end of the tune was reached it varied its custom by continuing to rotate until the motor was turned off by human hands. This cannot be made to happen by any normal manipulation of the controls in advance. In spite of the unfamiliar tune, an elaborate accompaniment was whistled—the record for neither of these evenings gives any indication of the apparent locus of this whistling. Upstairs again, Walter was asked why he had not stopped the Victrola, and gave the very sufficient reason: "Because I didn't want to!"

During the afternoon of this date, with no intent of provoking any psychic phenomena, Margery had started the ground-floor Victrola, in the presence only of Cross, her own

maid, Lydia, and E. A. Filene's Japanese valet, Taya. It proceeded to play the record over and over again, some twenty times, the listeners winding the motor when it threatened to suspend. Through fear of disturbing Walter's psychic arrangements, the lid was not lifted in search of a repeater. As the listeners stood around the instrument, a loud "Woof, woof!" was heard, vocally. Later, while Margery was upstairs, she stated that she heard her name called six times, in a man's voice; Cross and Taya denied having done it. No statement is made whether they heard it.

Walter stated on the evening of the twenty-sixth that he wished to make some experiments. He sent the Kid downstairs, to stay for five minutes and then come back. He next instructed all the sitters to go downstairs to the front room on the ground floor, and one after another to sit down on the piano stool for two minutes, the rest keeping a fixed circle meanwhile. At the end of each two-minute period, two raps signaled for the occupant of the stool to be changed. Then, under instructions, they all went in and sat on the dining-room table for five minutes, and finally for five minutes on the stairs. During all this time nothing occurred physically except the raps.

Margery was sent downstairs for five minutes, alone, on October 28. She returned with the news that pieces of furniture had been moved about down there—a stool stood on top of the Victrola and a chair at the foot of the stairs. She and all the other sitters denied having done this, and it was recalled that curious noises had been heard which might have been caused by the shifting of these articles. But Walter, too, denied any responsibility for the deed, although he indicated that he knew who had done it, on his side but outside his group.

There was an excursion downstairs on November 3, in the presence of the Harvard group; it is chronicled fully elsewhere. Between this date and my first sitting on November 15,

physical stuff was held in abeyance, Walter expressing a desire to conserve his forces. We went downstairs at his command on the fifteenth, but nothing happened; and he was not again during my visit sufficiently in command of the situation to repeat the experiment. And, the climax of the upstairs-and-down business demanding a special chapter, I must suspend this one here in order to meet that demand.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ADVENTURE OF THE PIECE OF STRING

PROFESSOR McDougall and Doctor Roback, of Harvard, have already been introduced to the reader. Their presence in Lime Street developed into a formal consideration of the case by a group of serious investigators which included McDougall, Roback, Dr. Gardner Murphy, and Mr. Harry Helson. Murphy was lecturer in psychology at Columbia, and research fellow in the same field at Harvard. His Harvard post was in part endowed by the Society for Psychical Research, and his work there lay in the psychic field. In the telepathic investigations which he was, and is, carrying on, he is making in my judgment the most important contribution that has yet been recorded in this subject. Helson was his assistant at Harvard, working for his doctorate and holding down their joint work during the period of each week when Murphy was in New York. Murphy himself, partly because of his overlaid schedule and partly because he does not regard himself as competent in the physical field, attended few of the Margery sittings, leaving the bulk of this work to Helson.

The Harvard investigators had taken serious hold of the case at about the time when the phenomena began to range about the entire house. From their viewpoint, the first attempt to meet adequately the difficulties of this situation was made on November 3. I include here the full record of the sitting, modifying the names to accord with my own usage. This document carries Helson's signature and reads as though drawn up by him.

"Seance held at 10 Lime Street, November 3, 1923.

"Psychic: Margery.

"Present: F. H., McDougall, Roback, Helson.

"McDougall and Helson arrived at the house at about

6.45 p.m. and took dinner there. After dinner and before dessert was served, Helson and Margery heard distinctly a sound which seemed to come from some place within the house. Margery believed it came from the Victrola, which she thought Walter was trying to start; Helson localized it as upstairs and thought it were as though a small cardboard box had dropped from a table to the floor. Margery and Helson went upstairs to the bookroom but nothing seemed to be disturbed. Cross, who was present at dinner but left before the seance, thought he heard a slight noise; so did F. H.; McDougall was not certain enough to describe it.

"After dinner F. H., McDougall and Helson went upstairs to the bookroom; Roback arrived at about 8.35. Margery remained below to supervise the servants' work, coming upstairs several times. Wood was brought up and she and Helson went to the seance room on the fourth floor to start a fire. Margery went downstairs, Helson staying to see that the fire went all right and then joining the other gentlemen in the bookroom.

"Part I: Preliminary Survey of the House.

"F. H. led the way, accompanied by the three visitors. Part of the time Margery was with the party. The house was thoroughly searched and so far as we knew we were the first to enter and the last to leave every room. Without entering into a full description of the plan, contents and structure of the house and surroundings, which were all shown us, our inspection was of the following general nature:

"Each room, cellar to top floor, was carefully inspected, all closets opened and scrutinized, all beds looked under, trunks, chests, bureaus, etc., opened, sofas inspected, etc. The grandfather's clock and the Victrola were locked by McDougall, who kept the keys. The three possible entrances to the ground floor, and hence to the rest of the house, were closed as follows: The two doors leading to the cellar were sealed with wax, carrying McDougall's thumb-print. The outside doors leading to Lime Street were locked. There was no possibility of entry to the house. The servants were sent out before the party reached the cellar. The maid returned at 11 p.m., before the seance was over, but remained in the kitchen in the cellar, being unable to get into the first floor because of the seals and because she had no key to the front doors.

"Part II: Seance on the Fourth Floor.

"We entered the seance room, after the inspection, at about 9.25 p.m. The psychic entered the cabinet and the rest grouped themselves about the table, hands lightly touching the top, in dim red light. Almost at once five raps came on the floor, from some place inside the cabinet or at the right end of the table. The table moved toward various members of the circle, stopping at McDougall once for several seconds. It tilted toward the psychic, twice remaining on two legs in the air for perhaps as long as half a minute. It answered greetings and questions as to procedure by raps upon the floor.

"At about 9.30 the usual call was heard: a whistle, seeming to come from the lower part of the house, at least not localizable as on the floor with the circle, which gave the first two bars of "Souvenir." It was distinctly heard by all members of the group. The psychic retired within the cabinet, one hand being held by McDougall and one by Helson. A chuckling sound came, denoting satisfaction at the success of the whistle."

[The next paragraph relates to the water test of the voice, and has been given in full on page 80. It need not be repeated here.]

"At 9.40 the control said he would try to play Taps. After about ten minutes of waiting all heard distinctly, as if from the lower part of the house, or so it seemed to me, Taps played as if on a chimes set. At ten o'clock, within sixty seconds after the church clock struck, we all heard ten strokes on what seemed to be a soft musical instrument or chimes affair. This the control called his 'celestial clock.'

"The control asked if we would like to have the clock stopped and we replied in the affirmative. He asked that he be given a half-hour's leeway, and asked McDougall what time he would like it stopped. McDougall said that 10.30 would suit him. The control then asked if he trusted Roback, and when he received an affirmative reply he suggested that Roback accompany the psychic downstairs and return with her. This was done; Roback reported that as he came upstairs, the psychic ahead, the clocks were both running.

"While the psychic and Roback were downstairs, Helson put the dinner gong in the right-hand inside corner of the cabinet. When the psychic returned to the cabinet the control was asked to play this. This did not take place until he had suggested that the psychic and Helson sit on the stairs, which

was done for about three minutes, after which the psychic went into the cabinet again. Soon the gong was heard to sound, as if something were being scraped along its edges.

"The gong was brought to the front of the cabinet, where it rested between the psychic's and Helson's feet. In the meantime the cabinet had received several very violent pushes, which had sent it toward McDougall and away from Helson; so that Helson had to pull his chair over to bring the psychic properly between himself and McDougall.

"The gong was put on top of the table and we asked the control to ring it there, if possible. Some discussion ensued, and while it was in progress four raps came, announcing good night. With that the circle was at an end, at 11.15 p.m.

"Part III: Inspection of Clocks, Doors, etc., below in the House.

"We all left the room, Roback first. Helson and Roback saw that the grandfather's clock on the stairs had stopped at exactly 10.30. The doors were still locked; after McDougall had looked at it he unlocked it and returned the key. A little clock in the reception room had likewise stopped at exactly 10.30.

"An examination of the seals and the locked doors revealed that no one could have tried to enter through these, or gained entrance to the first floor through them.

"A word about the cabinet in which the psychic sits. This is a box-like screen of pine wood, about four feet wide and three deep. The front part, facing the other members of the circle, is open, having only a light drapery of black cloth, hanging from a cross bar. It is thus easy to look into the cabinet at any time and with the dim red light one can see the outline of the psychic. Her hands are held at all times.* In these experiments no control of her feet was attempted. When the light commonly used is off, pitch dark prevails. But the phenomena take place under both conditions. Some raps were heard in various parts of the cabinet, once something resembling a scratching sound.

"The facts recorded above were, save where otherwise indicated, those which all members of the group observed.

(Signed) HARRY HELSON."

* At this period, only intermittently except when the Harvard investigators were present; later, at all times.

Barring the fact that phenomena were not attempted downstairs in the presence of the investigators, this was all thoroughly typical of the sort of action had at the seances of the period. The elaborate precautions against fraud, of course, were wholly a function of the presence of the Harvard group. Their experience with the case had been largely under the technique according to which the phenomena had to be pursued about the house by the investigators. It was idle to attempt any disguise of the fact that, on general principles and from a critical viewpoint, this was highly objectionable. It put the investigator under a fundamental disadvantage which robbed him of all confidence to formulate favorable conclusions. It would have been bad enough, simply to have had the entire house for theater. Added to this was the complication that the psychic was at large and unattended, immediately prior to the production of phenomena in places which she was known to have thus visited. The investigator need not be accused of carping at trifles when he expresses the gravest doubts of his ability, under these conditions, ever to satisfy himself that the phenomena are genuine. Whatever happens, whatever his examination before and after the fact, his reaction is bound to be that he has perhaps been outwitted, rather than that he has surely seen valid phenomena.

Margery's house itself added a factor of uncertainty. It possesses an architectural complexity (largely the result of extensive remodeling) which surpasses belief. There are two flights of back stairs, affording four independent points of access to the front of the house; there is a butler's pantry with a dumb-waiter. The whole house fairly teems with curious closets, crannies, cubbyholes large and small, blind shaft-ways, etc., the utility or necessity of which is not always apparent. The more mysterious ones doubtless occupy space that hung heavy on the remodeler's hands, but even when one has formulated this idea some of them are very puzzling. One would have to live in the house for many days, as I have done,

to learn all these complexities and to acquire confidence in one's ability to search the premises adequately, to seal one part of the house against invasion from another, or the entire structure against invasion from without.

The Harvard group had seen just enough of the house to make them estimate this problem at its worst, adding this specific worry to the questions of principle involved in the upstairs-and-down technique. With no thought of bringing direct charges against Margery, they were of course obliged to consider the physical possibilities of fraud. And in doing this, they were able to outline a working hypothesis of confederacy which would account for much if not all of what they had seen. The confederate under this hypothesis was not one of those known to be in the seance room. He was an outsider, working downstairs when the sitters were up, and in the cellar when they were down. The servants were, of course, the most obvious suspects, but no progress had been made in identifying the accomplice. In McDougall's typically conservative formulation, he was visualized simply as "any resident of the Greater Boston district" other than the ABC and the Harvard personnel.

After their experience of November 3, on which familiar phenomena had failed to occur after precautions against confederacy had been taken, the Harvard group brought with them to their next sitting a more active form of this hypothesis than to any previous sitting. The date was probably November 10; no record was made, owing to the emotional conditions induced by the outcome of the sitting; so I can only piece out what happened through consulting the memories of Margery, F. H., McDougall, Roback and Helson, who appear to have been the only ones present. All tell me substantially the same story.

At what turned out to be the critical stage, the company was sent downstairs, Margery first. They were to enter the dining room, taking only one long step in the hall; to place the table across the doorway; to sit on it, with feet off the

floor. They did all this, and got a thoroughly typical performance, of the sort which they had missed a week before.

There was good red light; the Victrola had been set to the beginning of the record. When all were seated, it started and played through; what it did at the end is not remembered. After it got going well, the piano stool in the reception room came into simultaneous action with the music—the first time two things had happened at once on the lower floor.

The stool marched out into the corridor, traveling, according to Helson, in a straight line; according to F. H., in a slight arc. It stopped in the hall, having gone about eight feet, and being now seven feet from the nearest sitter. The instant its motion ceased, the Harvard group pounced upon it for examination. They found nothing out of the way.

Upstairs again, Walter asked them what they would like next. McDougall, calculating that any apparatus of fraud would have been disconnected, used up, or in some other way rendered, by use, incapable of renewed operation without renewed preparation, very astutely told Walter that he would prefer a repetition of what they had just seen. Walter agreed to this. But he stipulated that, if after the second act they wanted a third one, they must not touch anything at the close of the second one. They might look at things to their hearts' content but they must be content with that. The investigators regarded this as highly suspicious. But they failed to get the implication that, if they would not *then* ask for more, they might at the end of the second act examine the theater of action in any way they pleased—they did not even need to tell Walter in advance that they proposed to do this. This would take the curse off his restrictions.

The company now adjourned to the ground floor again, whether under the exact previous arrangements I do not know. The program was repeated in every detail of the Victrola and stool performance. The Harvard group gave only visual examination, leaving the way open for further phenomena.

They went upstairs, and after minor events unremembered, the sitting came to an end with no further excursion downstairs. This, of course, to some extent would take the blessing out of my last paragraph.

The motion of the stool, whether rectilinear or curvilinear, had taken it directly toward a register in the hall floor, part of the original hot-air heating system. But the house now has steam heat, and this particular register has been disconnected. It stands a mere opening in the floor, with no pipe connection in the cellar to interfere with its possible use as a channel of communication between cellar and ground floor. These facts were known to Helson through his examination of the house. When he saw the stool moving toward the hole in the floor, he leaped away from the perfectly justifiable *working hypothesis* of fraud, and took it for granted that fraud was *actually present*. He assumed, not as a working hypothesis, but as a fact, that the confederate was in the cellar, with a thread, one end of which passed up through the vent in the floor and ran to the stool. The only trouble was that he could find no trace of the thread—the first time.

The second time he was more fortunate. During the visual search of the room, he secretly picked up and pocketed without saying anything about it, a piece of string. No dispute revolves about where he really found it, for this was ultimately agreed upon. But a very serious dispute hinges about where he *said* he found it.

Murphy at least was in no doubt at the time. He told me, over the telephone in New York, that word from Boston described the finding of a string *attached to the stool*. McDougall's behavior, too, is consistent only with his belief of this. His was the unpleasant duty of writing to F. H., telling him that they had caught his wife cheating, and defining their future attitude toward the case. That the letter was a masterful one is sufficiently indicated by the fact that, after all questions of fact had been cleared up, there was nothing in it to

prevent his being again asked to observe the mediumship, or to prevent his acceptance. Yet it did, of course, make the perfectly clean-cut charge of proved fraud.

F. H. was given, in this letter, the choice of breaking the sad news to Margery, or of leaving this "delicate office" to McDougall. He did it both ways; he told her the bare facts himself, then sent her around to have it out with McDougall. I have from her a very amusing account of the long interview that followed; and from McDougall I have the smiling comment: "Well, I think that is substantially correct." The substance of what occurred is that McDougall adopted successively every attitude which might be thought likely to get a confession out of the lady, by bully-ragging, threats, cajolery, kindness, persuasion or argument—and that each tack which he took got him exactly as far as the other one, to wit, exactly nowhere. Finally he uncovered his hand completely and showed her the evidence. She left him shortly thereafter, divided between indignation and uncontrollable laughter, to meet me at the Back Bay Station.

During the late summer of 1923, while Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was in this country, F. H. had written him, giving the salient facts of the mediumship; and Sir Arthur maintained the correspondence. Partly by word of mouth and partly by letter he passed the details on to me; and I had written to Lime Street, asking for sittings. In reply the house was placed at my disposal; I was told to come as their guest whenever I could, and to stay as long as I would. I was not able to get away until November 15. My going was wholly in my personal capacity, plus that of a representative of the news-gathering function of the *Scientific American*, of which I was at that time Associate Editor. I was on a psychic adventure.

Margery and F. H. met me at the train, the lady being fresh from bearding the lion in his den. Of course we talked of nothing else. The subject had only fairly got under way when we sat down to dinner in Lime Street. During the meal,

Margery handed me a bit of string, cord—I do not really know how to describe it except in terms of what it actually was. I did not see where she got it, and I had not observed the place from which it turned out that she had got it. She asked me, if I found it on the floor during a seance, what I should think. The most casual glance gave me my answer—that I should undoubtedly infer it to be a raveling from the carpet. If I had found it on the floor of a bare room, I should have speculated as to what had been done with the carpet.

I was then shown the place where it had come from, and incidentally the place where Helson had got his sample. The rug in the reception room, out of which the piano stool had marched into the hall, had a fringe which, if one so much as stepped on it, came off in pieces, of which mine was admittedly one—pieces about six or eight inches long, and of a curious alternating color effect which could mean nothing but the origin I have described; pieces which in thickness and texture could be nothing in the world but carpet threads. And I should certainly not expect to drag a piano stool across this fringe without detaching pieces of it; nor could I drag the stool eight feet in the direction of the disused register without crossing the fringe.

There was possible at the moment no direct comparison with Helson's exhibit; this was at Harvard. A day or two later, however, he brought it over to Lime Street, checked it up carefully—and admitted that it was identical with my sample, identical with the fringe of the rug, and that it *was* a piece of that fringe. He admitted that it wasn't evidence against Margery, that in its failure they had no evidence against her, that he personally had gone off half-cocked; and he apologized for this. The apology was not accepted. McDougall promptly withdrew his letter, his explanation was accepted and he was asked to make no apology, and he has been a welcome sitter ever since.

Helson insisted that he had been misquoted; that he had

never claimed to have taken the string off the stool. He had, he said, only described it as having been found "on the floor near the stool." That, of course, was necessarily the place where he *had* found it. His collegiate connection should make us willing to take it for granted that he did not deliberately falsify; whether he innocently said more than he intended to in his enthusiasm to make a case, or whether he was actually misunderstood, I don't profess to know.

Of course, a clever medium, bent on fraud, and requiring a string wherewith to engineer that fraud, could not do better than use one that would match the fringe on her rug—if she could get such a one, of sufficient length. It would be very extraordinary, indeed, if the string should break in such a way as to leave no fragment attached to the stool itself, and one fragment on the floor, of exactly the length to support the defense that it *was* a bit of the fringe. But even so, if the medium is as clever as that—and as lucky—the investigator must expect to go her one better in the matter of acuteness, and pray that he may go her one better in the matter of luck. He must expect either to *prove* that his exhibit *isn't* a bit of the fringe, or that it *was* used to move the furniture. McDougall's last words of comment to me were: "I can't seem to impress upon these impulsive young men that they mustn't get ahead of their evidence." This might well stand as a text for psychic research.

Margery herself is an extremely keen person. If she wanted to indulge in a bit of sport at the expense of her investigators, I know no one with the mental resources to do it better, or the ability to get more fun out of its doing. My dominant impression of her, as I brought it away with me after my four days in her house on this first visit, was one of mental alertness; and she has a sense of humor quite as wicked as my own. My visit at this time was made into one continuous circus by the fashion in which that confederacy theory was battled about the house, under her leadership. We agreed that Lydia

would not be a satisfactory confederate; that at the critical moment she would appear in the door of the seance room, with an expression of shocked horror on her face, and the words in her mouth: "Oh, Mrs. Crandon, I forgot to wind up the Souvenir whistle!" We agreed that Aleck Cross would not do; that he would trip over his own black threads and betray himself by his clumsiness in other amusing fashions. We would tip-toe about the house, looking for the accomplice under ash-trays and in teacups. If we cracked one joke about strings we cracked a hundred. Margery would gravely point out this, that or the other feature of the architecture or the furnishings, and gravely explain its rôle in her tricks. And so on *ad lib*.

Of itself, this would point equally in either direction. A clever trickster could not do better than pass off the charge of fraud as a joke; she might even hope to occupy my mind with the joke, and with herself, to the exclusion of more pertinent things. On the other hand, if she tries this, she is putting herself on a footing of quite unnecessary intimacy with me, and if she has a secret, I am the more likely to surprise it. In spite of every opportunity, I didn't come within miles of surprising any secret, and didn't believe she had one to surprise.

Margery, throughout the four days of my visit, was obviously greatly wrought up, though trying to conceal her emotion. It was impossible for her to talk about anything other than the allegation of fraud, or to listen to anything else, for more than a minute at a time. She enjoyed the horse-play and seemed to be relieved thereby; but this I regarded merely as an emotional safety-valve. Her obvious suppressed turmoil did not impress me at all as mere reaction from the strain of fraudulent operation or from the shock of exposure. Particularly in discussion of the question of possible motive for deception, she gave indications of a controlled indignation which seemed very real. A consistent attitude of amusement, of crushed and bleeding innocence, or of righteous wrath, would

have been incomparably easier for her to maintain fictitiously than the very impressive multiplicity of reaction which I observed. And on this ground, while the physical phenomena, as I shall immediately make clear, simply did not happen in my presence, the general impression which I took away was a very good one.

I was, however, well satisfied that the incident had come up; and later developments increased the intensity of this reaction. It had given me, for one thing, an invaluable opportunity to observe Margery's conduct in the face of serious charges, and one which I should not otherwise have had until ten months later. And it resulted in getting thoroughly threshed out the whole question about which the charges originally revolved. Through this threshing, the hopelessly inadequate character of the upstairs-and-down technique became clearer to Margery and to F. H. than it by any possibility could have been made in the absence of an incident of comparable seriousness. F. H. put the matter up to Walter in the terms in which he had thus been brought to see it, and he, too, grasped the common sense of the situation. Though he was acrid enough in some of his remarks about scientists and scientific viewpoints, he abandoned on his own initiative the practice of taking the medium and the phenomena downstairs. From this date the seances have taken place entirely in the one room, in Lime Street or elsewhere, in which they have been started. And this has been a major contributing factor in making possible the profitable investigation of the case to which we shall presently come.

CHAPTER XVII

AN UNWELCOME INTRUDER

WHEN we shed the corporeal rind and depart this life, Spiritualistic doctrine tells us, we pass on to a new life in other "spheres" or "planes," which are pictured as in some way "beyond" or "above" this material world in which we live. But we who live in this world and die out of it do not constitute the entire population of the worlds into which we graduate. The spiritist pictures his higher spheres as inhabited by a wide variety of intelligent entities of other than human origin. Some of these are beneficent, some distinctly evil; and the same applies to the ex-humans who have reached the other side. The various evil spirits, we are told, invade the seance room along with the good, and seek to control the medium for their own evil ends; so that a major problem of seance procedure, as the spiritist sees it, is their exclusion. The good spirits aid in this to their best ability, but they are not infallible and sometimes they cannot prevent the intruder from gaining dominance. When this occurs, the consequences to the medium are painted in terms vague but alarming.

The members of Margery's circle started without any particular knowledge of this item of spiritist creed; but at an early date they were warned in a general way by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The matter was referred to Walter, who assured them that it was perfectly all right—"Do you think I would let any harm come to the Kid?" For a long time the mediumship proceeded with no unpleasant consequences. But on the occasion of my first visit there occurred something which the regular sitters identified as an invasion by an evil control.

At my first sitting, on November 15, 1923, the Walter

control was slow in coming in; and after he came, about all he did was to talk, through trance (for the first time in four weeks), about the Helson episode, and the expectations which one might entertain about the scientists. On the sixteenth there was a much longer wait before anything happened. Ultimately the table came into action; but it moved, with hands on it, only back and forth in a straight line, in a fashion which the sitters unanimously insisted was clearly distinct from Walter's usual circular manipulation. After quite a bit of this the suggestion was put out, and accepted by most of the sitters as an obvious fact, that not Walter but some other personality was responsible.

The yes-and-no code was explained to this individual, and he was asked to jerk out answers with the table, in his own rectilinear style. The questions put him were all aimed at verifying that he was not Walter and at learning who or what he was. It became clear that he was replying "No" to every question, even when this answer was inapplicable. Opinions varied whether he would not or could not jerk the table more than once at a time.

Presently the table changed its behavior, and Walter's accustomed presence was recognized by his friends. He greeted them, collectively and then individually, in his usual fashion. But the relief was short-lived, for suddenly he was gone again. The table here did not return clearly to the previous technique of straight-line travel, back and forth, but behaved in most eccentric and unsustained manner. Finally it gave several sharp tilts and became quiet. Some of the sitters counted five of these, for "Good evening," and inferred that Walter was verifying his presence; others counted four, for "Good night," and did not know what to think. Then we suddenly got the command, in a tense whisper which some took for direct and others for trance voice: "Break the circle, quick!" We complied instantly.

In view of what ultimately happened, it was agreed by the

regulars that there had been four tilts, and that the tilting and the whispering represented Walter's efforts to break up the sitting before he got completely crowded out. Not understanding this, we continued our efforts to get something. For no reason she was afterwards able to put a finger on, the psychic suggested that we form the circle, in the dark. This we did; whereupon instantly she passed into trance. For a little she slept quietly; then she became active, and the light was turned on, for observation and in the hope of bringing her out more quickly. Her facial expression was now seen to be distinctly unpleasant—snarly I think would be the most descriptive word; and it was here that concern began to be felt with reference to what was happening to her. Thrashing of body and limb became pronounced, and the head jerked violently; uncouth sounds were mouthed uncouthly. It was obvious that, genuinely or fictitiously, we had to do with an evil possession.

Suddenly, with a particularly vicious snarl, the words, "Get the hell out of here!" were articulated, in tones of the mud-gutter rather than the Back Bay. It was taken for granted that the disturbance represented Walter's effort to expel the invader, and that the unladylike remark was the latter's retort. After some fifteen minutes, physical calm ensued; and presently the psychic awoke, a bit bewildered that she had been "asleep," but otherwise normal and apparently in no wise exhausted. Needless to say, the sitting terminated at once.

For the seventeenth the Harvard group had been invited; and while McDougall felt it the part of courtesy to stay away, Roback and the two "impulsive young men" were present. The seance was devoid of all physical features save movement of the table—in some slight degree apparently by Walter, but for the most part taken to be by the table-shoving stranger of the previous evening. The question whether we should identify this personality with that of the evil trance remained open. Precautions were taken against the medium's going into trance.

Walter seemed to be present for a short time in the middle of the action, but he quickly left the field to the stranger.

First and last, we got a good deal out of him. He again confined himself to straight-line movements of the table, but he was now able to pick out individual sitters by pushing it toward them. His insistence on thus honoring me confirmed the suspicions, which arose naturally out of the fact of my being the only strange sitter, that I was in some way responsible for his presence.

Finally we tried to get his initials by running through the alphabet and getting him to say "yes" at the appropriate letters. He at once and unequivocally gave B as the initial of his last name, which he might well do on speculation in my presence. When we tried for his front initial, it seemed as though he might have given us G; but on repetition he passed G without a flicker, and in fact let us run clear through to XYZ. Asked whether he really meant G, he answered both "yes" and "no," and in the end refused to answer at all. He seemed confused whether he had three initials or only two. Finally he balked at going on at all, answering "yes" with emphasis to the question, "Are you unwilling to indicate your initials?"

When it became evident that we could get nothing interesting out of the mysterious visitor and that we couldn't get rid of him, we stopped. It was early; I walked out with the Harvard group, and strolled up and down Beacon Hill with them for a sufficient period to give the regulars a chance to try it again, in my absence, if they would. They would, and did. Out of consideration for my possible sensitiveness (a total *non est*) they dismissed Walter when they heard me coming in, and said nothing about it; but ultimately it came out, through F. H.'s record.

"Walter came at once. The table moved in his characteristic manner, recognized Walter's friends as they were named, etc. The voice [direct, not trance] then said that there

had been difficulty, and admitted, when questioned, that it had been connected with Bird. He said that the intruding spirit was in a plane lower than his, nearer us and therefore better able to reach us. He was very grave about it; said the situation was serious. A sitting might be held the following night, as planned; but if he gave four raps for 'Good night' it must be terminated at once." He was not asked and did not volunteer whether the two disturbing personalities were one.

In its early part the seance thus authorized for November 18 was signalized only by movements of the table, too sporadic to be marked as due to Walter or to the stranger. Helson, who was present with Murphy and Roback, was restless and impatient. "Oh, I'm tired of this table stuff," he exclaimed; "let's get on to levitation and the music." This idea of producing psychic phenomena to order by opening a faucet amused the other sitters immensely; and the sentiment was taken as disqualifying him from psychic research, if his previous conduct had not already done this. From his behavior and from the fact that Murphy had to leave to catch a train, there was a good deal of confusion; so it was afterwards suggested that the signal to disband had been given and had gone unheard. The idea doubtless originated in Cross's insistence that he sensed the presence of evil. No attention was paid his pronouncement, though he got up and left the circle for what he regarded as a safer place on the side lines. This characteristic act drew considerable laughter.

In the effort to get things going, the light was put out at a moment when we were sitting in circle formation, with desultory conversation going on as usual. Suddenly we realized that Margery was again in trance; and we were left in only momentary doubt that it was again the evil possession. The physical reactions this time were excessive. Margery kicked the chair out from under herself and collapsed upon the floor, overturning the cabinet. It is considered of the utmost importance to

maintain the circle unbroken in the presence of such a seizure; this was done with extreme difficulty against her muscular convulsions. Various hideous throat noises were given out, but there was no coherent voice. The seizure did not last so long as that of the sixteenth; and again there were no after effects.

My next visit to Lime Street was early in April, 1924. There was considerable trepidation, and I believe some doubt as to the expediency of my presence. Nothing had been heard in the meantime of G. B., as we called him for convenience; and there was no desire to stir him up. We were prepared to adjourn at the slightest hint of trouble. But Walter came through at once, and stayed; and we got an excellent display of physical effects, with a perfect knock-out the next night. It seemed that the G. B. specter had been laid. But after my return to New York, Walter rattled his bones, stating that he had appeared with me, but that Mark and John had captured him, and in some dark corner of the fourth dimension had "sat on him" for eighty-four consecutive hours to make sure that he created no disturbance in the seance room! The problem still lacked a final solution, Walter said. But one must have been found, for I have sat dozens of times since, and G. B. has not been heard from again. When he is mentioned today, Walter merely laughs.

Now I went to Boston in November in my personal capacity, but with a large reputation as bad medicine for fake ghosts. Indeed, F. H. suggests that Helson's precipitateness may have been due to fear that I would steal the exposure from him and his group. I went in April to discuss Margery's proposed appearance before the *Scientific American* investigating committee. It would be easy to picture, as a motive for a fraudulent G. B., the desire to escape giving the usual performance in dangerous company. Equally such a fraud would, in the long run, through F. H.'s unwillingness to risk exposing his wife to the malign influence, afford a way out when it

became too dangerous to go on at all. The "impulsive young men" were confident that this stage had been reached, that we should have persistence of G. B. and abandonment of the mediumship.

The assignment of such motive as this to the invention, whether conscious or otherwise, of G. B., is predicated upon the assumption that the mediumship itself is fraudulent in whole or in large part. It stands or falls with that assumption, and need not therefore be discussed on its own merits at all. But there is a motive for the invention of G. B. by a genuine medium; for there are always blank nights and other accidents of genuine mediumship for which addiction to such a control as G. B. would afford a shining and standing explanation. Once started on his career, he could be filed away for such use as future need might dictate; if the need never arose, he need never be brought forth again. Passing mention like that of April 11 would be just the thing to keep him gracefully alive.

The evidence of subsequent sittings, however, is all against the theory that G. B. was an invention, even of this more innocent variety. The crisis brought on in November, 1923, by my presence at a time when the Helson charge was not yet disposed of, was no more severe than other crises which since then have come and gone without provoking any sign of G. B.'s presence. The reader of the latter chapters will find numerous places where a hint of G. B.'s visitation would have explained things that have gone unexplained, or would have enabled Margery to avoid many sittings which, in prospect, could be identified as unpleasant ones. That none of the critical situations through which she has passed since April, 1924, has led to the slightest display of the G. B. control must be argued strongly against his fraudulent character.

I am wholly inclined to regard G. B. as a duality, of deep-seatedness equal to that of any ordinary case of this sort of visitation. But whatever we may find the fact to be in the

end with Walter and the other regular controls of the Margery mediumship, comprehensive discussion of G. B. on his merits is hardly feasible; we lack the material. Little opportunity was given him to establish an identity or to display a continuity of personality. So far as such judgment was possible, I should be inclined to deny that he was continuous or self-consistent. Friday's jerks with the table impressed me not at all as an attempt at discourse, but merely as an attempt to create a disturbance. Saturday's display, real or fictitious, was surely an attempt at communication.

The G. B. trance was an active one, and gave even more grounds for a verdict on its physiological validity than did the ordinary Walter trance. F. H. and Brown were strongly impressed with the correctness of the symptoms. The icy hands were conspicuous and certainly denoted a functional crisis of some sort—though not necessarily one of trance, of course. I, too, was well impressed with the G. B. trance as a biological phenomenon. All this would argue strongly against conscious masquerade, and, except in the very improbable event that Margery is a hysteric, to equal degree against the subconscious variety.

Then a thought should be given the matter of Margery's acquisition of the data. If the thing is fraud, of either type, she must not merely know that such seizure is good form, but she must have a fund of definite information on which to base G. B.'s behavior. I have never caught her reading anything except letters, and I am inclined to agree with F. H. that she probably lacked this information—on Friday the sixteenth. But after this visitation little else was talked of for a day or so, and she must therefore have been better prepared for Saturday and Sunday. Did the performance of those days go beyond the first one?

Trance possession did not. There was more physical convulsion, but anybody knows that an evil possession should throw a fit. I found no evidence of new knowledge in Sun-

day's trance as against Friday's. Saturday's performance, with its capricious behavior of the control, was highly artistic. But only in this one respect did it go beyond its predecessor, and the Walter control is capricious; so this means nothing. Besides, on Saturday the medium was not in trance, and we should strongly entertain the theory that there was here subconscious manipulation of the table by the several sitters. It is particularly significant, in this connection, that the G. B. table operation should come down so hard on my own initial, B., and then flunk so completely the effort to give further initials. This is exactly what one would expect from subconscious propulsion of the table, by several sitters united, and without the psychic element that Ouija sometimes shows.

With this in mind, I am inclined to dissociate the disturbing control that manifested through the table and the one that manifested through trance. I told F. H. at the time that the latter impressed me, a bit emotionally motivated against the spirit hypothesis as I was, as more suggestive of genuine possession from without than any control I had ever before met. I must insist that the reader read this accurately, and that he realize that what I said does not imply any extreme degree of probability, any opinion that G. B. was "probably" a genuine possession. With this caution, what I said at the time still represents my opinion.

My first contact with the case was my last for nearly five months; and during this period, thanks to G. B., I was in the distressing position of having met a case of physical mediumship without having seen any of the physical phenomena. I was therefore dependent, during this interval, upon my observations of Margery's psychology for any estimate which I might make of her probable genuineness. I might expand this chapter considerably by going into this matter, but in view of the fact that my ultimate experiences with Margery's mediumship were abundantly physical, it seems unnecessary to do so. When the phenomena are shown, on physical grounds, to be

genuine, the medium's psychology is a matter of minor interest. And I hope to show, to any reasonable reader, ample physical grounds for pronouncing the phenomena genuine. So I shall say nothing about Margery's psychology, except to make one remark.

Regarding Margery's manual dexterity, her ability actually to put into effect any of the resources of the illusionist's profession, I cannot testify. But it is abundantly clear to me that her mental resources in this direction would be ample. Anything that can be done in the direction of applying the tricks of illusion and sleight of hand to mediumship, Margery would be well able to grasp. This admission must be made, to preserve good faith with the reader. But if I make it, I must insist that it is not of itself an unfavorable factor. We cannot demand that the medium be a moron, as a prerequisite to our taking her seriously. All that this statement implies is that one who undertakes to investigate Margery's mediumship must be very confident of his own competency in this field, or he has no right to ask us to accept his conclusions.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PSYCHIC PIGEON

THE only time of the year when it is possible for F. H. to get away from his practice is in December; and it is hard enough, even then. For months he had been looking forward to a brief European trip to be made at that time in 1923, and arranging so that his absence should be possible. At the time when the string episode and the G. B. incident were boiling up to their coincident climax and boiling down again, all arrangements had been completed for him and Margery to sail on December 1 and to be gone until Christmas Eve. There was accordingly little time for peaceful resumption of the Lime Street routine after the war; but several sittings were held in what remained of November.

A previously scheduled attempt to produce the phenomena of the mediumship in the neutral or hostile atmosphere of the Harvard Psychological Laboratory was gone through with on the twentieth. The sitting was to have been a prelude to others, and at this first attempt the Harvard group were not to be present, leaving the ground wholly to Walter and his friends. Helson was there to let them in and to tell them whatever they needed to know about the physical arrangements. A wire across a corner of the room supported a curtain, by way of cabinet. His preliminary functions discharged, Helson withdrew and left the ABC group alone in the building. They sat, and the initial behavior of the table suggested the presence of the notorious G. B.; but soon it became clear that Walter was really there. There was a little conversation, altogether through the table. Then somebody asked Walter whether he were in control of the situation again, and

he replied with an emphatic "No." Somebody else was so unwise as to mention my name, with its direct G. B. associations; whereupon the imperative signal to stop came through.

Of course it got instant obedience; but later, back in Lime Street, they tried it again. They got the usual table greetings and considerable of the Walter voice. He expressed his complete contempt for the Harvard scientists, and a generally good time was had by all. But again he rang off suddenly, with a spoken good night and without further explanation.

November 22, brought forth only conversation, with table and with voice, partly from Walter and partly from other controls; that from Walter dealt mostly with his undertaking to go with the family on the ocean trip. The twenty-fifth was again given over to talk; the twenty-sixth to talk plus the incident which I describe in detail below; and finally there was a farewell sitting on the twenty-eighth. This was almost entirely a blank for two hours, though every effort was made to get through to Walter; but eventually he came in, immediately after eleven o'clock, and said a few words. It was thought that there was significance attached to this hour; details of this are given in Chapter LIII.

The only incident of any note falling in the interval covered by the preceding paragraphs was the one that constituted the backbone of the November 26 sitting. For some time prior to my Lime Street visit, there had been more or less talk by Walter, revolving about the idea of a living apport. I probably have readers who are not familiar with the term, so I will explain that it is a very special, long-range variety of the movement of material objects without material contact. It consists in the delivery, into the seance room, of something from a remote place—in some alleged instances, from a place as remote as half-way around the world. At one instant the object in question is not there, at the next it is. The spiritists are clear in their minds that not a phenomenon of materialization out of nothing is involved, but one of transportation of

a material object. In most cases there is a *prima facie* presumption that, if the phenomenon is a genuine one, the apported object has had to overcome the physical barriers of closed doors and windows to get into the room. It is, of course, one of the most improbable of all alleged psychic phenomena, intrinsically, but instances are told which it is difficult to explain away. Among those taking the phenomenon seriously, opinion would seem to be about equally divided whether to think of actual dematerialization, filtration through the molecular interstices of the wall, and reassembly on the other side; or to regard the appearance of the apported object as evidence of its passage into, through and out of a fourth dimension. If I were placed in a position where I were obliged to guarantee the genuineness of an apport, I should feel that the latter idea does much less violence to other things which we think we know than does its alternative.

Walter's talk had first turned in this direction when my proposed visit was submitted to his approval, some weeks before I actually came. He jokingly remarked that he would provide a mate for the Birdie (he referred to me and addressed me so from the first, and, indeed, after discovering that I was really a human being, and not a scientific iceberg, so did the entire company). From this he passed, with what degree of seriousness I do not know, to a pretty definite promise that some day he would apport a living pigeon. I must apologize to my Boston clientele for the use of this word. I am aware that on Beacon Hill they are doves, but out of expectation that this volume will have a general circulation I use the more general name.

During my visit, the promised apport was discussed considerably outside the seance room. I tried to make F. H. agree with me that Walter was spoofing them throughout, as he had obviously been on his first mention of the topic; but I could get no slightest acceptance of this idea. On November 25, returning vigorously to the subject, Walter spoke as

though it were a kitten that he would deliver. There was a good deal of joking about it; one lady expressed marked preference for a kitten over a pigeon; another asked Walter if he couldn't bring her a baby, and was reminded of the scandal that would ensue if he did. Finally he promised the event for the following night, if conditions were favorable; the expectations of all, so far as they had any, centered about the kitten rather than the pigeon.

The sitting of November 26 started along usual lines, and followed these until about 10.40. Then Walter began giving instructions for preparatory arrangements against the apport, speaking as though fully confident of producing the manifestation. "You must have a man in every room. We must do this scientifically. Do you trust these people?" F. H. reassured him on this point, whereupon Walter remarked that there were no scientists among them. To the question, "Where will you put the kitten?" Walter replied, "I can't say. I have to take a run and a leap, and I can't tell where I shall land." F. H. connects this up with the assumed fourth-dimensional origin of the phenomenon, and the apparent necessity that Walter make the leap between his world and ours.

Some few moments were spent in getting Walter's directions quite clear. The program which he laid down was for Charles, Brown, Caldwell and Mrs. Richardson to go, just before eleven o'clock, to the kitchen; and to work their way back upstairs, examining the house carefully as they went. They might go anywhere they liked, using white light on the kitchen level, red on all the upper floors. He placed no restrictions upon their movements except that, in actually passing from the kitchen to the ground floor and from there to the second floor, they use the back stairs; and that in crossing the halls they walk quietly and carefully.

Margery, Cross and Adler were to form a second squadron. When the inspection group left the seance room to go downstairs, these three were to follow quietly; they were to

go all the way down to the ground floor, using the front stairs; they were to sit down on the lower steps, near the clock. The rest of the company were to trail along after them, nine in number, in any order in which they happened to come. All twelve were to hold hands during the entire experiment, and not to talk. Walter himself made the choice for the searching group and for Margery's two immediate companions; he was indifferent about the order of the other nine.

The searchers were to remain for five minutes on the kitchen floor, then to continue upstairs, searching as they went. All directions were carried out, says the record, in perfect quiet; there was no confusion and no excitement. This is more than I can say of the average search of the premises, or preparation for a critical experiment, by a group of scientists! The kitchen premises, says the record, were searched with some thoroughness—sufficient to make sure that no confederates were present. Doors and windows were observed on this floor, at about 11.05, to be closed. After the stated five minutes the four searchers went upstairs, walked into the dining room, crossed the hall, and continued upstairs, looking into all the principal rooms as they went. This was made in large part an *a posteriori* examination, however, by the fact that, as Brown led the way into the dining room, he saw something white on the floor, which he picked up. It was a pigeon; he carried it with him in his hand to the seance room. The dining room at this juncture was fairly well lighted with a red bulb.

Some of the larger group on the stairs had heard a slight noise in the dining room before the searchers entered it. Margery said she made it out as a fluttering; but it was audible to those nearest the doorway.

When all were once more in the seance room, their progress thither having been accomplished in perfect order, red light was put on and converse with Walter resumed. The pigeon stood on the edge of the table, where Brown had

placed it. It remained almost motionless, apparently composed and unfrightened; Brown said its heart was not fluttering as he held it.

The general attitude of the sitters is chronicled as one of wonder and awe. Walter had to ease the atmosphere a bit with some of his customary humor. He reminded the group that the promise of the pigeon preceded that of the kitten, and intimated that perhaps the latter would be forthcoming later. "I could tell you something, but I won't," he said; under persuasion, he amplified this a bit. "Remember the *time* the bird was found; remember I said I could tell you something." The time was therefore recorded—11.06, as closely as could be determined. Walter seemed in no hurry to go, but when told that O'Dell had to catch a train he said good night at about 11.40.

The pigeon was examined in white light. It had stood, scarcely moving, during the half hour or more since its transfer to the seance room. This, however, was characteristic; the bird lived, in Mrs. Brown's care, for six or eight months, and I often saw it. It was one of the most placid and imperturbable of Nature's creatures. When Brown picked it up off the seance table, it resisted slightly. It was pure white, with red eyes, no markings. It carried a registration tag on one leg with the mark 1921 R. I. Evidently a carrier, it showed no resemblance to the pigeons found so freely about Boston.

While this inspection proceeded the question of open windows arose. Of those in the dining room, the only one that opens was found locked. It is impossible to be certain that no other window in the house was open before the bird arrived; but the chilly outdoor air would doubtless have been noticed had one been open for any time.

At the end, every person present denied, in turn, having brought the bird in. The servants were out for the evening and returned only after the pigeon was found. Margery's young son was known to be in his room, presumably asleep.

So much for the record. F. H. tells me, in addition, that the pigeon produced droppings at frequent intervals after it was picked up, but that nothing of the sort was found anywhere about the house, indicating its very recent arrival. An attempt to trace the registration number revealed that this was not the bird to which it had originally been issued. Pigeon fanciers, we are told, frequently transfer these bands from dead birds to unregistered live ones.

Two or three of the sitters spent a lot of time canvassing all places they could find in or near Boston where pigeons might be bought. They told a tale wherever they went to the effect that the good-looking blonde who had recently bought a pigeon here wanted another of the same breeding. They drew a blank with this story wherever they went.

Now I hold no brief for this apport, and equally I hold none against it—the latter point probably needs emphasizing more than does the former one. It is, of course, Walter's only performance of this character, several subsequent apports with which he is credited being not in the same class with this one. Intrinsically a live-pigeon apport impresses me as the most improbable thing that is described as having happened in Lime Street—but that doesn't prove anything, one way or the other. Most of the sitters, I believe, are wholly satisfied with its genuineness; and, of course, as is always the case in the nature of things, those present were more impressed with the adequacy of the surrounding conditions and the precautions taken than those absent and reading about the incident in cold type.

Margery herself, however, if I may believe what she tells me, places little credence in the pigeon. It offends her common sense just as it offends mine and I suppose that of most of my readers; so she thinks that one of the sitters brought it with him, released it in the house, and then, when he found that the joke had got out of his control, was afraid to own up.

As far as the Walter element goes, it would be comparatively easy to picture Walter as entering into the spirit of the

joke. This would be equally feasible, whether one regarded Walter as a subconscious masquerade, as an undefined element of the seance, or as the actual brother from the other side. In the latter event, from what I hear of his lifetime exploits, his acceptance of the jest and participation in it would be altogether in character. Walter had every confidence, from the start of the incident, that the promised apport would be delivered that night, but it is no great complication to picture the Walter personality as having acquired, telepathically or through normal means, a knowledge of the pigeon's presence, if it really came in with one of the sitters. The danger that confronts one who believes this to have been the case lies in the extreme ease of drawing a conclusion more damaging to Margery than the known facts justify.

Many of the episodes of this period of the mediumship, while not standing four-square on their own feet, are such that, after considering the demonstrations of genuineness with which 1924 was filled, we can come back to the events of 1923 and feel that a large presumption of genuineness is theirs by reflection. In the present instance, the phenomenon is of such startling character and stands so isolated that I do not think it would be fair to ask the skeptic to do this. We might point out that we have never had any real evidence of fraud on Margery's part, and therefore should not assume fraud in this instance; but that is as far as we should go in support of the pigeon from the other facts of the mediumship. As far as believing in the pigeon is concerned, I shall not attempt to dictate to you; I can't prove that it happened and I can't prove that it didn't. You must make your own choice.

CHAPTER XIX

THE EUROPEAN EXPEDITION

My contact with Margery in November had given me certain favorable impressions; but these were altogether psychological in nature, or concerned the purely subjective phenomenon of the G. B. episode. The mediumship was claimed to be of outstanding objective character, and I had seen practically a complete failure to produce objective phenomena. Having, with little exception, no means of judging how much credence I should place in the reports and observations of the sitters who had seen objective phenomena, I was left without any means of judging the probabilities of objective genuineness, or the importance of the case if genuine. But the reports which F. H. passed along to me of what happened to Margery in Europe, I was able, in most instances, to subject to independent checking through statements from those with whom Margery had sat in England and France. It was this which gave me my first grip upon the case, my first basis for judging it. The rôle of the European expedition as thus giving the case a background and a standing which it had not previously possessed is one of great importance, which the reader should appreciate, after reading this chapter, as I did after reading the documents on which it is based.

Margery's experiences in Europe dealt with strange scenes and strange apparatus. In the attempt to abstract its vital significance, we find that it demonstrates three very fundamental propositions:

I. That the mediumship is not a function of the Boston locality.

II. That if it depends upon confederacy, F. H. and none other must support this charge.

III. That it will stand up under the scrutiny of observers trained and specializing in the appraisal of the objective phenomena of the seance room.

Sailing from New York on December 1, Margery's first psychic experience on the other side consisted in a seance which she gave in the Paris residence of the late Dr. Gustave Geley, at 5.30 p.m. on December 8, 1923. There were present Geley, his daughter and his secretary; Professor Richet; and three others of Geley's coterie. A makeshift cabinet was put up, using a three-way screen, with a shawl thrown over the top and coming down about two feet in front. At first Richet was at the psychic's left and F. H. at her right; shortly, however, Geley replaced Margery's husband in the control of her right side. There was red light regulated by rheostat, and a music box that played more or less continuously. The control was the most severe to which Margery had up to this time been subjected. Richet and Geley each held one hand; both Margery's feet were in Richet's lap; and each of these gentlemen had a head on one of her shoulders.

With hands on it (Margery's being temporarily released for the purpose), the table tilted "Good evening" (five tilts) on all four sides, and stated that there were six spirits present. The circle was then formed, and for the balance of the seance control of Margery's extremities was complete. The Walter voice came through at once, saying "Good evening" to each of the hosts, and reciting, on request, one of Walter's humorous verses (Backward, Turn Backward; Chapter LIII). There was excellent levitation of the table three times, in the brightest red light to which the mediumship had yet been exposed. Work was then begun on the cabinet; and after numerous raps and tappings, the entire structure was brought down upon the three heads of Geley, Richet and Margery, all of whom were inside it. This brought great applause, and cries of "bien"

and "encore." The cabinet restored, it was twice repeated. Walter stated that an attempt would be made to give "Taps," but this was apparently found impossible.

London was the next port of call. On December 12, at 8 p.m., Margery gave a sitting at the British College of Psychic Science, the center of most of my British psychic adventures. Those present included Mr. and Mrs. J. Hewatt McKenzie, heads of the College; two other gentlemen; and one other lady. The cabinet was the one in use when I visited the College ten months earlier. Two pillars set out about five feet from the wall constituted the corners and supplied the foundation for the heavy brown curtains that formed the sides. A rectangular table was used, weighing about thirty-five pounds; and, as in Paris, the entire sitting was held in red light.

McKenzie sat at the psychic's left and F. H. at her right. Walter came through with tipping of the table, and shortly after with a few words of greeting. There were raps on the floor, on one of the pillars, and on the center of the table. Walter whistled once, inside the cabinet. And that was all. The atmosphere at the College would be a far more receptive one than at Geley's house, and many persons would apply a stronger word, such as "gullible," in this connection. It is conspicuous evidence of good faith that a poorer performance was given here than there. But we shall find the case full of evidence of that particular sort; the success of the sitting is seldom found to be a function of the things that would be the controlling factors if the mediumship were fraudulent.

At some time on the next day, Margery and F. H. sat with Mrs. Cooper at the College. There were physical phenomena of some note, but these were aspects of Mrs. Cooper's mediumship and not of Margery's, so I do not describe them. But Mrs. Cooper's control, Nalda, appearing promptly, greeted the visitors, and continued: "And there is Walter; and that's a test."

As such it was inadequate, I fear, since five persons connected with the College had sat with Margery and met Walter the day before. But Nalda went on: "And here is John; and that's a test. And here is little Mark; and that's a test." F. H. insists that the names of John and Mark had not been mentioned and were wholly unknown at the College. If it occurred today it would be open to the criticism that a great deal of specific knowledge of the case has been published and has in other ways become general property. But in December, 1923, this was not the fact; and if I may ask the reader to assume the good faith of Margery and F. H., I consider it practically certain that at the very least this giving of the names of the Richardson boys was genuine cryptesthesia. The coupling of the accustomed adjective "little" with the name of Mark, Jr., was especially good—the probability of its being known in England is even less than in the case of the mere names.

Margery's greatest European triumph came on December 16, when she sat at 5 p.m. in the rooms of the British Society for Psychical Research, in Tavistock Square. Those present included Mr. Eric Dingwall, research officer of the Society, and Mrs. Dingwall; Mr. Fielding, the conjurer and psychic researcher; Lady Barrett; three other gentlemen and one other lady. The cabinet consisted of the corner of the room, curtained off. The sitting was held in good red light from the start. Dingwall sat at the psychic's left, controlling that hand and both her feet; F. H. held her right hand in plain view of all the sitters.

The table used was the celebrated trick table of Mr. Harry Price, the magician. It is about thirty inches square, with a hinged trap in its center and a shelf half-way up the legs. This shelf is so fastened that any pressure on its under side will infallibly dislodge it with a loud clatter of sheet iron. The space between shelf and table-top is blockaded with

mosquito netting. The under surface of the table-top is wholly inside this netting.

All hands being on the table, including those joined in control, Walter came through almost at once and said "Good evening" on all sides of the table, with the usual five tilts. He then levitated the table six separate times, from two to eight inches clear of the floor each time, in excellent red light. At Dingwall's suggestion *a white light was then turned on, and in this the table was twice levitated to a height of six inches.* This was something never seen before by any of those present, and made a prodigious impression. The sitting closed after some voice from Walter. Dingwall's attestation carries a proviso against publication, but I am permitted to say that it specifies that there was sufficient light from the red bulb alone to permit one to read one's watch; and that all hands were visible, raised above the table, as the latter levitated. Dingwall was sufficiently impressed to make an American trip for the sole purpose of seeing more of the case; he arrived in December, 1924, and is here as this volume goes to press.

Another sitting followed, on the evening of this day, at the British College. The McKenzies were present, with two other ladies and one other gentleman. The arrangements were as before at the College, save that this time a twelve-pound table was used. Walter kept this dancing continually to the music, and finally levitated it four to eight inches, in full white light, repeating the performance several times. While this went on, McKenzie controlled the psychic's legs; and her hands were held in his, off the table. All present pronounced this the best levitation of their respective experiences.

Margery's final European sitting was given on December 17, at the apartment of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, across the way from the Victoria Station. The cabinet consisted of a three-way screen, with a rug over the top coming down about two feet in front. The table was a square one, of about ten pounds. There was no music.

With no light at all save that which filtered in accidentally from without, Walter came quickly, tilting the table in greeting. Then he did some very high levitation; whereupon F. H. reverted to the white light theme, *turning it on without consulting Walter*. All hands were visible in their entirety on top of the table, and continued levitation of four to eight inches was obtained. Margery's feet were in Sir Arthur's lap, F. H.'s in contact on the floor with Lady Doyle's.

Darkness restored, Walter came through vocally, whistling in the cabinet. Then he whistled in Sir Arthur's ear, in recognition of his deafness; after which he whistled behind Lady Doyle. Next he shook the cabinet and brought the rug down on the psychic's head.

At F. H.'s left there stood a shelf, on which was a sheaf of dried flowers, lying flat. For about ten minutes, during other phenomena, there was continuous disturbance of these. At the end, when full light was restored, one flower from this sheaf was found on the floor, at Lady Doyle's feet. The circle had not at any time been broken.

Margery's own sittings, given as described, did not exhaust her European experiences. At every opportunity while in England, she and F. H. sat with the British psychic photographers, Hope and Mrs. Deane. Every plate exposed in Margery's presence showed, if not extra faces, then good quantities of formless extraneous marks, of the sort usually recognized by Spiritualists as ectoplasmic. This was taken as strong verification of Margery's powers, since with the generality of sitters about one in seven is the proportion of the plates exposed by these two photographic mediums that shows results.

The first experience of this sort was on December 12, with Mrs. Deane, at the Stead Psychic Center. F. H. reports: "With no introductory conversation of significance between us, I saw Mrs. Deane take two plates out of her own package of quarter-size plates, special rapid, in her dark room, and put

them in her obviously empty plate-holder. I examined the camera, handed her the holder, and saw her put it in the camera. She focused first on Margery, then on me. An exposure of each of us was made; then we went with her into the dark room and saw the plates developed; I having, when the plates were first put in the holder, written the time and date on each."

The plate exposed to F. H. showed, on development, two extras: a complete face of a good-looking young man, and another half face. Neither has been recognized.

The plate exposed to Margery herself showed also on development, two extra faces. The dark-complexioned boy remains unidentified. The blond face Margery refused to commit herself on, at the moment; she insisted upon sleeping over it. The more she looked at it the more certain she became; and on returning to America with it and showing it to her mother and sister with no statement of her own opinion, they agreed with her that it is nothing less than an excellent portrait of Walter. Aside from the general proposition that it is a good likeness, three pertinent details are advanced. The hair, parted at the left and pushed backward and upward in a mop, is stated to be characteristic. Walter shared with Margery a family trait consisting in a slight twist of the mouth to the left, with corresponding absence of symmetry in the chin; the psychic picture shows this admirably. More significant than either item is one that shows only under a glass. Walter carried a scar on his left eyebrow, where he had been kicked by a horse; and under a little magnification the extraneous face shows this.

I think we may laugh at the idea that this is a normal picture of Walter obtained in any way by Mrs. Deane; and criticism must then hang upon the claim that the resemblance to Walter is accidental and coincidental. This claim, I must confess, does not impress me strongly. I would not be interpreted as saying that Walter, disembodied, was present when



THE WALTER EXTRA OBTAINED BY MRS. DEANE

The half-tone process has robbed the extras of much of the clarity which is theirs on the original prints. The one nearer Margery is the one recognized as Walter (page 140)

the exposure was made. Other explanations of psychic photography exist and in my judgment are equally plausible. But that this is a genuine psychic photograph seems to me reasonably probable.

December 14 saw a hasty pilgrimage to Crewe, for a photographic sitting with William Hope. F. H. had read my account of my Hope sitting, and religiously did everything that I did, with the addition of one or two more things which his own experience as an amateur photographer suggested to him. I will not bore the reader with a detailed statement of these precautions; they are familiar enough, or if not that, accessible enough. Of the two plates exposed, one showed an extra. It was unrecognized by Margery; but when she showed it to her mother, Mrs. S. was so affected that "it struck to her stomach" and made her ill. She claimed it at once as Margery's father, at an age before Margery knew him. Study of the face shows many points of similarity to existing pictures of Mr. S.

Next morning four more exposures were made, by Hope and Mrs. Buxton as always, but in Mrs. Buxton's house. Of these two showed extras. One of these, a young man over F. H.'s head, is wholly unidentified. Another, to quote his statement, "may be my grandmother. The hair is parted the same, there are deep lines at each end of the mouth, and there is a straight left eyebrow, all characteristic of her. The picture is that of a woman about fifty; my grandmother died at eighty-five." This one we need not take seriously unless our emotions move us to do so.

On returning to London, another sitting was obtained with Mrs. Deane. One exposure was made, but spoiled when Mrs. Deane got the plate mixed with the glass screen, "developing" the latter and leaving the former to lie about in the light. This, incidentally, seems to be about as valid a demonstration of the lady's photographic skill, and as valid a commentary upon the probabilities of her getting away with any fraud in the presence

of reasonably acute sitters, as could well be offered; though of course her insistent use of her own plates leaves wide open the possibility of fraud *out of* the sitters' presence. One can, in fact, support her work only by insisting upon the photographic likeness of the extra faces. A second exposure was made on the present occasion, and properly handled in the dark room; it carried an extra, not recognized.

Anything in the nature of a concluding summary on these European experiences which I could say, I have said at the head of this chapter. So I merely reiterate that their importance as establishing a presumption of genuineness is enormous; and that the Margery mediumship came back to its home fairly shrieking for scientific examination. We shall see how, ultimately, it got this, how it fared at the hands of the investigators—and how the investigators fared at Walter's hands.



FURTHER PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF DECEMBER, 1923

Upper left: recognized as Margery's father. *Upper right:* extra faces apparently in process of formation. *Lower left:* unrecognized. *Lower right:* suggestion of F. H.'s grandmother, considerably younger than at death.

PART III

**THE SPONTANEOUS DEVELOPMENTS
OF EARLY 1924**

CHAPTER XX

A LONG BREATH AND A FRESH START

FOLLOWING the return from abroad, Margery's seance routine in her home was resumed. Old phenomena were continued in old and in new forms, and new phenomena were developed. But many new ideas and new procedures were brought home from the contact with British spiritualism, and others grew up spontaneously in Boston; so that the mediumship now enters a definitely new phase. The division made in these pages is not an arbitrary one; it corresponds to the facts.

F. H. brought home the conviction that the ABC group had experienced all the standard phenomena of the seance room, with the exception of materialization. He felt that there had been suggestions of this, but only suggestions; that in this direction lay the room for progress. At the same time he had no wish to revert to the trance technique; and, without trance, his only hope for materialization on a worthwhile scale lay in darkness. After some preliminary uncertainty and fumbling, therefore, the Lime Street routine settled down into one of continuous darkness at all sittings.

If this was in some ways unfortunate from the investigator's viewpoint, it had at least one compensating advantage. The preliminary fumbling was got through with in a few sittings, and one of the rigorous principles established by the process of trial and error was the permanent necessity for a circle. From mid-January one may be certain that Margery's two hands were held from either side, and that this control prevailed, or at least was believed to prevail, throughout the sitting. Though instituted merely as a means of provoking the

occurrence of phenomena, this will be regarded by the detached observer as a valuable means of verification and a long step in the right direction. Hereafter the hypothesis of fraudulent use of Margery's hands definitely involves negligence or actual connivance on the part of her neighbors in the circle. Moreover, since the circle was maintained all around the table, the hypothesis of active confederacy involves two sitters in connivance or negligence or both.

For three months of the new epoch, one is still usually unable to place specific responsibility for control. The circle stood, in the minds of the sitters, as a measure of spiritistic routine and not as one of control. They always catalogued those in the circle and those out of it, in the hope of learning the most favorable personnel for the circle; but it had not occurred to them that it was necessary to specify the order of sitting. This instrumentality of precision was introduced only when I began to sit frequently, in April. But one finds, from January on, occasional mention of the identity of the two sitters next to Margery, in connection with their explicit testimony of continuous hand control throughout some critical interval.

During 1923 no fixed places for certain sitters had been customary, save that Cross, a bit timid about too close contact with the supernormal, always wanted to be opposite Margery, as far from Walter as he could get without leaving the table. After the new year it became customary for Caldwell to sit at one side of Margery when he was present. When Caldwell was absent, Brown often took his place; when Caldwell was present, Brown or F. H. usually sat at Margery's other side. With Richardson present, Brown or somebody else would resign in his favor the privilege of holding the psychic's hand. Ultimately, however, F. H. specifically and pointedly reserved for himself one of these two critical posts.

This, of course, to a newcomer in the seance room seemed ground for suspicion. But F. H. regarded himself, and rightly,

as the major investigator of the friendly group; hence as the one who should, and who most advantageously could, hold the place of closest contact with the phenomena. This is exactly parallel with the tacit arrangement under which, when I was present, in the absence of any other investigator to whom I wished to defer, I got the place at Margery's other side.

Through his occupancy of this position and his status as brother-in-law of the control, a relation grew up between F. H. and the Walter voice under which there were many personal remarks of a semi-private nature addressed to him by the control, usually chiding him about his long hours of work and trying to persuade him to let up on himself. Since most of Walter's whispered remarks have to be repeated by the person nearest the cabinet, for the benefit of those farther away, it was a matter of economy to put the addressee of the largest number of his comments in the position of greatest audibility. Moreover, on occasions there was doubt about the propriety of broadcasting what Walter was saying, and F. H. preferred to act as censor rather than delegate the duty. After all these considerations had given him a place next the psychic for a certain period, he had become more skillful than any other sitter in catching Walter's words when these were indistinct; so it became advantageous to have his ear rather than another one in the place next to Walter's voice. And finally, he has confessed to an element of selfishness in his permanent occupancy of the chair at Margery's right. The ABC sitters, of course, and friends like the Richardsons, have never had any inclination to question this permanency; outsiders, equally as a matter of course, have been inclined to question it.

The advent of permanent darkness had one far-reaching result. The vocal aspect of the mediumship became more and more marked, and soon made the use of the table for preliminary contact between Walter and the sitters superfluous. The table was employed, with hands on it, to announce Walter's coming on December 30 and 31, 1923, and January 1, 1924;

and not until his presence was thus assured was the circle formed and the light put out. On New Year's night tilting and levitation, with hands on the table, assumed the dignity of a formal episode of the seance. Mrs. Cadwalader, editor of *Progressive Thinker*, Spiritualist weekly, had never seen a table behave in just this fashion, she said.

On January 3, 1924, the table responded slightly to contact, but there was no real greeting till the circle had been formed, when it came, both through the table and vocally. On the tenth, in red light, with hands on the table, this danced to the music, greeted a new sitter by surging toward him, and "laughed" in the customary way at the jests of the sitters. On the thirteenth it was employed as a means of greeting; on the seventeenth it moved a few times without hand contact. But replacement of table talking by vocal speech had on this date reached such a stage that Walter took the census of his "gang" vocally. On the eighteenth, too, there was vocal communication, with the utmost freedom and without any table preliminaries.

From this date, save in rare instances and under exceptional circumstances, Walter did all his talking by word of mouth and all his greeting by whistling, laughing, speaking, or some other means involving no use of the table. This ceased to be an instrument of communication and fell back into a rather inconspicuous position among the ordinary physical apparatus of the seance. And, too, from this date the voice became so thoroughly standardized a feature of the seances that it seems no longer necessary or even desirable to catalog it by dates. Its absence became far more a matter for comment than its presence; it may hereafter be assumed, unless specifically denied, that whenever the circle sat and heard from Walter at all, he spoke to them—usually in the dark, of course, but now and then in the light. For even though the general principle of sitting in constant darkness had prevailed for the time, there were of necessity moments when light was present

for purposes of experiment, exploration, or rearrangement by human hands of the seance-room properties.

For something like four months the personnel of the sitters was not materially changed. The ABC group continued to be the regulars, Caldwell being absent more often than all the others combined. The Richardsons were frequent sitters; other old friends came in when they could, and new ones appeared from time to time. I will introduce here only Mrs. S., mother of Margery and Walter; and "Charlie" Ekland, former mate on F. H.'s yacht, who comes all the way from Bridgeport whenever he can, just to attend one sitting, or at most two. McDougall came now and then, as did Roback.

In April all this was changed, and I must go back to pick up another thread. In the summer of 1922, largely through my influence, the *Scientific American* decided as a matter of policy that the science of psychic research was one that lay in its field, and one that it would have to cover. We invited contributions in this field, and got and published several. Some were from those who took it for granted that the phenomena occur; others from those who took it for granted that they do not. Most were rather extreme statements; and it became clear that the problem of getting contributions on psychic matters which could be recognized as authoritative was unsolved.

Our Managing Editor at the time was Mr. A. C. Lescarbours, well known as one of the old original radio amateurs, in the days when the radio amateurs were doing real pioneering, and whose name also occupies a prominent place in the general electrical field, in the literature of motion pictures, and in the world of magazine writing. He and I worked out a plan whereby the *Scientific American* would be able to maintain its interest in psychic science, publishing material which would have to be accepted as authoritative because it would be the result of our own first-hand investigations. We took the view, set forth earlier in this volume, that the pressing issue hinged

about the reality of the objective phenomena. Our plan involved a definite effort to make a contribution of importance here. We formed a committee of five prominent persons, all interested in things psychic; and we proposed to pay \$2,500 for the first demonstration of an objective psychic phenomenon which should satisfy four of the five to the point where they would be willing to have their names connected with such an award. Announcement of this offer was made in the *Scientific American* for January, 1923; and it was to remain open until December 31, 1924.

Of the gentlemen who consented to serve on this committee, Professor McDougall was one. Regarding the other four I can do no better than give the brief paragraphs through which we introduced them to readers of the *Scientific American*.

Dr. Daniel Frost Comstock had at that date recently retired from the physics faculty of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with which he had been connected since 1906, to devote his whole time to his commercial practice and to the development of his laboratory and his inventions. He was a member of the Advisory Scientific Council of the Society for Psychical Research until this body disbanded.

Dr. Walter Franklin Prince, educated for the ministry and pastor of numerous churches, gravitated, through the psychotherapeutic work undertaken at St. Mark's in-the-Bouwerie, New York, into psychic research. He was then Principal Research Officer of the American Society for Psychical Research, in charge of its permanent headquarters and its scientific and investigational work.

Dr. Hereward Carrington is widely known for his psychic investigations, and for his many technical and semi-popular books in this field. He was one of the committee that so exhaustively investigated Palladino's mediumship; and on more than one occasion he has visited Europe as the more or less formal representative of American psychic research.

"Houdini is so well known in connection with his escape specialties that some of us may have overlooked his standing as a master of the more conventional sides of the magician's profession. At the same time he is deeply interested in psychic phenomena. He has wide experience in the detection of fraudulent mediumship." I use quotation marks here, because if I were writing these notices today, this is the one which I should revise.

Inasmuch as these five gentlemen were volunteering their services out of interest in the subject, we deemed it necessary to provide them with executive talent. I was accordingly designated Secretary to the Committee. In point of fact I was to discharge all the duties of a chairman, but I carried the lesser title to emphasize the fact that I was not a voting member, and to avoid so far as possible the implication of any organic connection between the committee and the *Scientific American*. I am sorry to have to record of the general public that in the end it was unable to keep this distinction in mind; and, of the committeemen, that our attempt to show them consideration failed of their unanimous and ultimate appreciation. Until the grand climax which falls in Chapter L, I was executive officer for this committee, conducting all correspondence with applicants, making all arrangements for sittings, providing the place and the apparatus for sittings, designating individual members to serve on sub-committees for the consideration of particular cases, and writing up the results of the seances for publication in the *Scientific American*.

From the start there was great coyness among the mediums. We assumed that this was due to the desire of each medium to let some other take the plunge; we inferred that when one of them had done so others would follow. We were disappointed. After the committee had been in existence for fourteen months, it had sat with but three applicants and had dismissed one other without sitting. The verdict in each case was fraud, conscious or otherwise. But no medium of general

repute or of any great presumptive genuineness had appeared before the Committee.

So we made a gesture. For our April issue (1924) I prepared an article detailing the unsatisfactory character of the responses we had got, the mediocre character of the mediums with whom we sat, our own disappointment in view of our original expectations, etc.; all leading up to an enlarged offer, pledging us to pay the expenses of any high-class medium who would come forward, regardless of whether he should win our award or not; and pointing out in plain language the unfavorable conclusion which the average non-spiritist would form if none of them came.

Objections to the make-up of our committee, which today I consider to have been well founded, had been the reasons advanced by various prominent mediums for their non-participation; and these reasons continued to rule. We got no response to the enlarged offer from any medium of note. But I had been in correspondence with F. H. ever since my November visit; and after the April article had been out for several weeks, I had a letter from him, expressing his and his wife's willingness to have her appear before our committee, subject to certain provisos.

One of these was that sittings, at least in the preliminary stages, should be held in Boston, out of recognition for the Doctor's professional engagements; and in fair exchange for this concession, F. H. proposed to waive our offer to pay the medium's expenses, and himself to pay any expenses incurred through sending me and my New York committeemen to Boston. This we agreed upon. Another condition was that, so long as we could properly do so, we conceal the lady's identity; and in this connection I invented the names for him and her which I am using in this volume.

Acting on behalf of the *Scientific American* and the committee, I made all arrangements with Margery and F. H. It was certain that this was the only mediumship of the slightest

apparent worth that would come before our committee, and it was felt that we could therefore afford to take our time with it. The medium and her friends felt that the procedure, followed in our prior cases, of pitchforking the psychic without preparation into serious test seances, with their atmosphere of unfamiliarity and apparent suspicion, was very unwise. We, for our part, were willing to try what a more gradual approach would bring forth. We therefore agreed to import new sitters, new tests, new procedures, and new conditions very slowly, letting the psychic work gradually out of the familiar atmosphere into that of final tests. As an example of this easy approach to the ultimate tests, I mention only that it was many weeks before we asked Margery to sit anywhere else than in her own seance room in Lime Street, or attempted the exclusion of her accustomed sitters. We made a determined effort to escape from the criticism which has been levied against most investigating bodies, of trying to move too fast and too unsympathetically to a climax.

The seance of April 12, attended by McDougall and myself, was the first given specifically for members of our committee as such. Following this, it was the program to leave the case in charge of McDougall and Comstock, working as a sub-committee, who would attend, one or both, whenever they could, and see how far they could get toward conclusions. McDougall associated Roback with him, as a non-voting attaché of the committee; and Comstock was to bring in members of his own staff as he saw fit. Miss Gladys Wood, his private secretary, was utilized several times in this way; and later he assigned Mr. R. W. Conant, one of his laboratory men, to the case. Conant was often present as Comstock's representative when Comstock was unable to attend. I am strongly minded to acknowledge here the very great value of Conant's services. Most of the apparatus used in Margery's seance room, alike for Walter to play with and for the committee to work with, came out of Comstock's laboratory. When not

something that could be bought in finished form, like the dictaphone, it has usually been constructed by Conant. And his services as photographer alone have been priceless.

Starting then in late April, the members of the *Scientific American* committee, myself, Conant and other attachés, began to be frequent sitters, so that for long periods at a time no sitting would be free of the presence of one or more of us. If I were telling the story of the committee's work with the case, all this would lead to no confusion. But I am telling the story of the Margery mediumship, in which the *Scientific American* investigation is but the longest drawn out of numerous incidents. The presence of the committee and of the apparatus which they brought into the seance room led to many brand-new types of phenomena, of which I need say nothing at all until I have brought my narrative down into May. But on the other hand, many of the old phenomena persisted into and through the period of the committee's examination of the case. I have therefore found it necessary to explain the committee here, rather earlier than I was really ready to do so; but the next chapter must contain references to their sitters, so there has been no other way out. The next few chapters will indeed be a complex of formal and informal sittings, of friendly and scientific procedures, of ABC sitters and of *Scientific American* investigators. And this will continue until I get to a place where for a time the investigation absorbs the whole mediumship.

Certain changes in the seance-room customs, which were instituted as a result of the *Scientific American* consideration of the case, may conveniently be dismissed here. The junction between the psychic and her husband, whatever one believes about them, becomes a matter of grave concern if we are to try to convince readers who have never seen the house or the sitters that the phenomena are valid. So, as an alternative to trying to separate them, we hit upon the easier way of posting a committee attaché in the space behind them, to verify the

continuity of their hand-hold; and this duty fell to me when I was present. I found it very simple—there is a variety of holds which I could get on their two hands, of such character as to make it absolutely certain that these hands remained with me. The development of this technique occupied me for about fifteen minutes at the beginning of one sitting; after that it was defined in my mind just what I needed to do when on this post.

There had been some use, before our investigators took up the case, of Geley's zinc sulfide luminous paint as a means of marking objects which it might be wished to locate in the dark. This paint, after application, has to be "activated" by close exposure to a moderately bright light, after which it glows for an hour or more, according to the intensity of activation. Our investigators encouraged its use when it was necessary for them to sit in the dark, and frequent references will be found to it. But in their presence there was much more of red light than there had been since the preceding autumn.

F. H.'s undertaking to pay expenses when I and others came from New York included, of propriety, maintenance in Boston. He was anxious, as a mark of friendship, as an economy, and as a means of giving us closer contact with the case, that we stop at the Lime Street house. I always did so, twice taking Mrs. Bird with me; Carrington did so; Lescarbours did so when he went with me, and Keating (see page 182) when he went with Carrington. Houdini and Prince preferred to stop at a hotel. But between my presence in the house for a total of fifty-seven days and nights on eight different occasions prior to the smash-up of August and four occasions since; Mrs. Bird's for twelve days and nights, of which ten were consecutive; Carrington's for forty-four days and nights on six occasions; and Keating's for ten days consecutively—between all this, we gained a degree of confidence in the innocence of the household arrangements, a degree of insight into Margery's daily life, a thorough familiarity with all sorts of angles,

which would not be got in any other way. Mrs. Bird in particular came into very intimate contact with Margery's whole daily routine; and another significant factor which I should mention was that Conant had absolutely free access to the house at all times. It is one thing to have the premises of fraud examined after they have been prepared for the examination; it would be quite something else to have skilled investigators living on these premises, and likely to turn up in the wrong place at any moment.

There were disadvantages in this close contact with the case. If we wanted to talk privately we had to run away; but we always had my car for that purpose—there is a deep groove on the map between Westfield, N. J., and Boston, worn there by my numerous passages of 1924 over this route! And in general the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages. In particular, one disadvantage which the reader may picture did not exist. Carrington and I had made it plain to F. H. and Margery, right at the start, that our rôles as guests and as investigators must not be in any way confused or permitted to interfere, either with our free action in the other. This was thoroughly understood; we had all freedom to make working hypotheses of fraud, to test these out—in F. H.'s words, to "catch her if you can."

The members of my committee were in a peculiar position. They were obliged to start afresh; to ignore all that had gone before, and all that should come after save what passed under their immediate observation and control. They were bound to one another but to nobody else. The reader must realize this; but he must also realize that he is not similarly bound, and that his is the privilege of weighing what comes from extra-committee sources. Writing at a time when I have severed my committee ties, I, too, am now entitled to appraise the other sitters; to decide which ones I may credit and to what extent.

Dr. Richardson is a man whose standing in his profes-

sion and in general science is fairly comparable with Comstock's and McDougall's in theirs. His scientific work stamps him as a capable and conscientious observer; what I have seen of him in the seance room indicates that he brings these traits there with him. The same may be said of Dr. Goodall, and of Murray the lawyer. If we reserve that they have not yet reached the professional eminence of the others, the same may be said of Brown the physician and Caldwell the dentist. I am going to insist that *statements of phenomena observed and control exercised by these five receive equal credit* with similar statements made by members of the *Scientific American Committee*.

As regards phenomena observed and reported, I can honestly make, and do make, the same demand on behalf of F. H. himself. His professional position and my very careful observations satisfy me that when he puts down on paper the statement that a certain thing happened, that thing happened. As regards his control, his relationship with the medium introduces a general principle of doubt, which, on general principles, might run in two directions. The critic from outside will wonder whether he really wants to control her; and also will wonder whether his natural trust in her does not make him, unintentionally, a little less conscientious in his consistent and persistent control than if she were another man's wife. My own observations make me willing to laugh the former suggestion out of court; but force me regretfully to give the latter one a partial endorsement. In these observations and this reservation I have with me Carrington, Keating, McDougall and Prince.

The reservations are not blanket ones. When F. H. states that he had control of certain of Margery's members at a given moment, we believe him. It is to his claims of continuous control throughout an interval that we find ourselves forced to enter exception. We find him recording or claiming continuous control, without reservation, when the record states or

implies, or we know or can strongly surmise, that he has left his seat to adjust the Victrola or answer the telephone. We find him making the same statement, without reservation, when we know that he has released Margery's hand, to permit her to scratch or for some other legitimate purpose, but when he has made no announcement of this fact and when we therefore do not know for how long she has thus been free. We find him releasing her hand or foot to permit its transfer to the control of another sitter, similarly without announcement, so that there is no way of knowing for certain whether it has been free longer than the transfer would properly require. We find him putting out the light, at the beginning of a seance or after a period of illumination, while his hand is still out of contact with hers; and making no announcement terminating the resulting interval of uncertainty regarding control. And we observe him committing other varieties of the same general error—violating in other respects the principle of continuity of control.

Now the bulk of the phenomena occurring in Margery's seances are such that for their fraudulent production by her hand or foot, the member in suspicion would have to be free during the actual occurrence of the questioned episode. But on pages 189, 286 and 381—simply to pick out three instances which come to my mind as I revise this chapter after having written the succeeding ones—will be found instances of phenomena where this is not necessary; where all that is required is that a guilty member shall have been free for a short while, at some indeterminate prior moment, for the purpose of setting the stage. The unfortunate fact is that when F. H. has sole responsibility for any element of control, one must ask whether any theory can be built up which will throw the observed manifestations into the second category; and if one can construct such theory, one must regard the phenomenon, in this particular instance at least, as unproved and unprovable.

If any reader were to infer that this lapse is intentional on F. H.'s part, I should match F. H.'s indignation with my

own. It is certainly not intentional; it is simply a function of his confidence in his wife, plus his failure to realize the existence of the second class of phenomena, depending upon absolute continuity of control for their validity. The voting members of my committee, while early observing his weakness here, were apparently seeking escape from the hypothesis of genuineness rather than confinement to this hypothesis, and so followed the policy of not pointing out the error of F. H.'s ways and requesting that it be corrected. While my association with them lasted, of course I had to defer to this policy. Since I was freed from this necessity I have pointed out to F. H. the facts of these three paragraphs; and there has been a decided improvement, though even now habit sometimes rules him.

F. H.'s professional work deals with emergencies. When his telephone rings it must be answered, and by him. This is one reason why we permitted the sittings to remain in Lime Street so long. With the committee sitting, and with me or a substitute in control between F. H. and Margery, his going involved no break in control. Without a person thus to slip into the circle in F. H.'s place, Margery sometimes takes the hand of the next sitter and sometimes hangs loose until he returns. Except when drawn by Comstock, the record never indicates what measure was taken during his absence, and indeed, only by accident informs us of his departure.

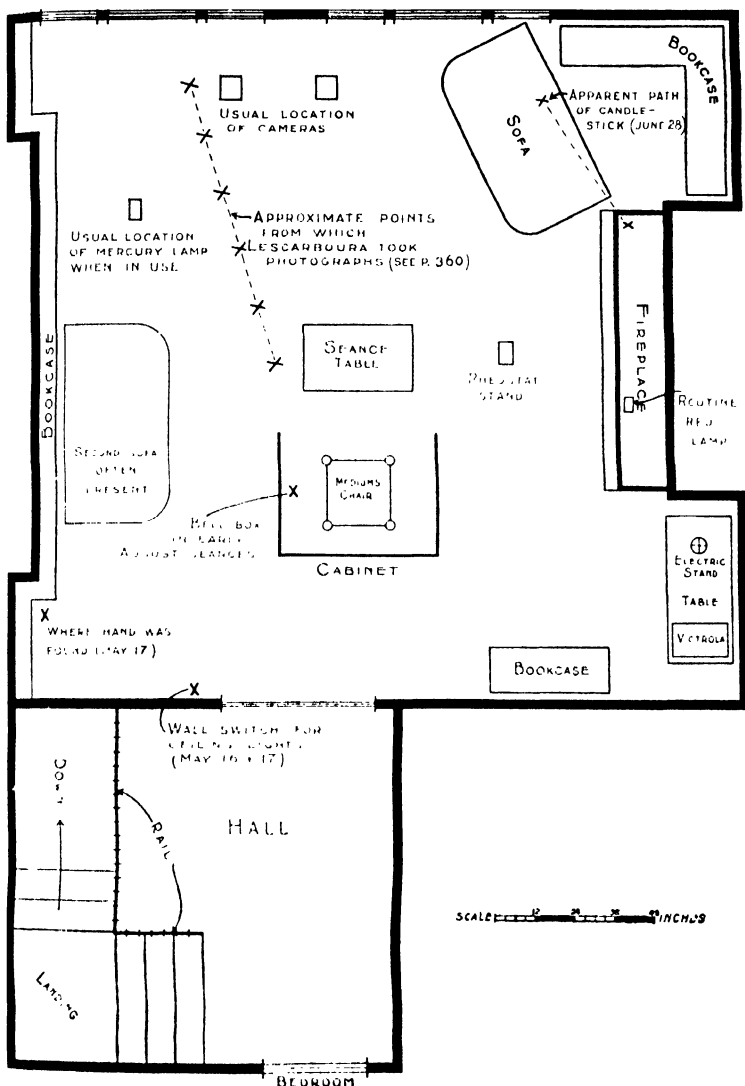
The committee's injection changed the situation in the matter of records. Comstock always made an "official committee record" when he was there. At first he experimented with various ways of dictating to a stenographer, present in the dark room or in the dimly lit hall. He finally settled into a fixed routine whereby he remained out of the circle and used the dictaphone. The idea was for him to furnish copies of the records to all his colleagues and to F. H. Perhaps half of them received his editorial attention and were thus delivered. The other half were transcribed, but enormous pressure on

Comstock's time, followed by a severe injury in an automobile accident, prevented him from editing them, and as I write on January 2, 1925, they have not been delivered.

Whenever I was present, I would draw up a memorandum of what had happened before going to bed, and considerable practice in this has made me quite expert at carrying the action of the seance in mind long enough for the purpose. Usually when Carrington was present he and I signed this memo and handed it to F. H., who might let it stand as his own private record, or might draw up one of his own, independently.

The dictaphone record, made audibly in the presence of all, was regarded as official and binding. Anybody could object or add to what Comstock said, and the absence of such comment was taken as acceptance. For the more important sittings Comstock made a point of getting these records in F. H.'s hands, so that the latter could secure signatures of the other sitters while memory was still warm. Prince's attestation was on a different basis from that of his colleagues, as explained in Chapter L. But from the middle of April, as the statistical matter at the end of the volume will show, there were more records, and I hope better ones, than there had been. In the total absence of committee sitters, which was still a fairly frequent occurrence, F. H. or Mrs. Richardson made the record, as of old.

The omission of other sitters from the list of those whom I propose to take as serious authorities means, in every case but one, that the question of their credit does not arise with sufficient frequency to be embarrassing. The exception is Adler. To one who knows him, Adler is a very keen-minded person—Carrington pays more respect to his judgments than to those, I believe, of any other non-committee sitter, and I can easily make myself feel the same way about him. But I am not sure to what extent it is fair to the reader to ask him to believe that "Fred Adler, real estate agent," stands for anything. I am afraid that if I were in your place and you in



GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE LIME STREET
SEANCE ROOM

For several of the more important sittings special diagrams are given. This plan shows the more permanent features of the room, and illustrates also several specific incidents, as indicated.

mine, and you tried to get me to take him as a serious observer, I should register some degree of protest. So, after recording my own and Carrington's judgment, I shall leave it to yours how far to follow ours. The point is of considerable importance, because anybody coming into the house and looking for the confederate, will inevitably pick "Freddie" as the one person who combines sufficient opportunity with sufficient acumen, to make the charge other than preposterous on its face.

A little must be said about general arrangements, and then we shall have an open road to the climax of the case. The seance room was built as a library, supplementary to the one on a lower floor; and it was built with no door—simply the open doorway. When sitting, the curtains that hung here were frequently supplemented by a sofa or other more tangible barrier; and ultimately it got rather customary to post Conant in the door to keep out "the man with the axe"—Lime Street slang for the hypothetical confederate. McDougall was particularly distressed by the inability to adopt the customary dramatic measure of sitting behind locked doors. I myself am a bit uncertain to what extent this is a necessary precaution (in the presence of other precautions aimed in the same direction, of course), and to what extent it is a mere conventional gesture. Several very successful seances in Comstock's apartment *were* held behind locked doors; but the doors which now grace the Lime Street seance room, permitting it to be locked, were finished only in time for the seance of December 31, 1924. Perhaps the largest contributing factor in this delay was the very amusing conditions under which (Chapter L) McDougall's desire for a door was first made known; certain it is that, for this or for other reasons, the door was a standard Lime Street jest for months.

No comprehensive search of the room was ever attempted, for excellent reason. Walter is very capricious, and one can never know what is to be offered tonight. The room is so complicated, so full of things, that search would be meaning-

less unless one knew exactly what one were searching for, exactly what phenomena were to be produced. If, disregarding this, one attempted a thorough search, which should be pertinent to anything Walter might do, one would find his repertoire so varied that the search would consume the entire evening, and the seance would never be reached at all. These obvious disadvantages of using the medium's own premises were to be met by sufficient use of other rooms before any question should arise of a final committee verdict. Such use of other premises has in my judgment been sufficient, and sufficiently successful, to justify my verdict that the familiar room and the possibilities of preparation which it offers are no part of the mediumship—else I should not be writing this book from the stand of demonstrated genuineness.

CHAPTER XXI

ASH TRAYS, FLOWERS, ET CETERA

WHEN one attends a typical seance at the British College, given by a medium who has been practicing for a term of years, one finds not alone the physical arrangements for the sitting well organized, but also the action from "the other side." If the mediumship be one in which the production of physical effects plays a part, one finds the room well provided with tambourines, sleigh bells, flowers, etc., for the spirits to play with; and one finds the spirits extremely well practiced in playing with them. I have sat with Evan Powell when I got the impression that the air was full of flying bells and flowers.

I should have expected that, as one of the results of his being exposed to this atmosphere, Walter should have picked up this trick; and that F. H., too, should have picked up the habit of supplying him with small objects of one sort or another as a potential basis for such phenomena. For in spite of the fact that occasionally in the past there had been, say, a dinner gong or a tin plate in the room, it will be realized that it does mark a new departure of the Lime Street practice to find that, as part of the seance routine, a point is made of always putting on the table something which Walter may carry about the room.

The first sitting after the return home took place on December 30, 1923. As an initial attack upon the procedure which I mention, the table carried three roses and a Chinese gong with a stick to ring it. Caldwell was in control at Margery's left, and two of the roses were deposited on his right hand; so that, strictly speaking, the incident means nothing in the absence of an explicit statement of control of her other

hand. At another moment the gong was struck with the stick, several times, in time and in tune with the Victrola.

During the sitting of December 31, Walter asked that a growing plant be placed on the table, within the circle, of course. Shortly after (in the dark, as throughout this chapter), a rustling of leaves was heard. At the end, a leaf was found on the floor at the side of Mrs. S., Walter's mother. The broken stem was located from which it had come.

The gong was again present on January 1, 1924, with the expectation that it would be rung again. After unintelligible voices had been heard, the hammer was dropped on the floor between Margery and Richardson. F. H. then interpreted the voice as having said that Mark would touch his father with the hammer; so F. H. must have been at Margery's other side. Again on the tenth, after the gong had been rung once by use of the hammer, the latter delivered Cross a gentle blow (at what anatomical point is not stated), then fell to the floor between him and his neighbor. Cross was unquestionably on the far side of the table from Margery, with at least two sitters between them in either direction.

The gong was abandoned shortly after this, as uninteresting; and for a time Walter's small telekinetic operations were conducted with the aid only of flowers. At the beginning on January 17 there were again three roses on the table. In the dark these were heard to move about; and occasionally Caldwell and F. H. (doubtless at Margery's either side) felt caresses on their faces, in turn. The phenomenon was repeated several times, then just at the end was extended over a somewhat wider territory; one of the roses touched Brown's face and fell into his lap.

F. H. was touched by a flower from the table on the twenty-seventh; then Mrs. Richardson, certainly not sitting next Margery, asked for such a touch, and presently a flower was dropped in her lap. Again on February 3, the flowers on the table were heard to move about. One was dropped on Brown's

hand and another on F. H.'s; one hit Miss Richardson on the nose; and just at the end, Mrs. Litzelmann asked for one and it fell at her feet. The spatial range is gradually being extended.

Something more alarming than this occurred on February 16, something that would have a chapter of its own had it been two or three times repeated. On the table at the start were three red roses, brought by Mrs. Litzelmann, who said, "Walter, I have brought you three red, red, red roses." Walter rejoined, "I have brought *you* a yaller, yaller, yaller rose; and Kitty (Mrs. Brown), I have brought *you* a yaller, yaller, yaller rose; and Ma, I have brought *you* a yaller, yaller, yaller rose." During this speech rustling of leaves was heard in the cabinet, low down, at Margery's right; and one could wish that it had been considered pertinent to introduce into the proceedings an immediate statement of control by those next the psychic. At the end of Walter's speech, single roses landed in the laps of the three ladies addressed, simultaneously or in very rapid succession. Walter then asked for light; and it was seen that each had received a small rosebud, yellow, uncrumpled, with stems obviously fresh cut. The leaves were fresh and moist. As is often the case in Walter's sittings, the unexpectedness of the manifestation made any rigorous check-up impossible; had Margery been inclined to do this stunt fraudulently, it would have been simple enough for her to have got the yellow roses into the room. The very pat opportunity for their production, however, was not entirely of Walter's making; and the accuracy with which they were delivered would in this as in many, many other instances cry out for explanation. And, of course, to make them fraudulent we must assume a lapse in control; but Chapter LIII suggests such a lapse.

The next flower episode was a long time coming; and in the meantime, ingenuity had provided Walter with additional playthings. On March 9, for instance, two small wooden ash trays stood on the table at the beginning. They were "placed on the hands of all sitters in turn, then knocked off again." I

have no doubt that Walter asked the hand-holds to be placed all on the table, and then went the rounds of them. On the tenth, something of wider range was done with these trays; they were lifted off the table and various heads tapped with them.

March 12 saw a return to the flowers. It is not clear whether they had been on the table always in the interval; but unquestionably they had been there sometimes. Walter is very apt to drop some type of manifestation temporarily, apparently through lack of interest in it; and when this occurs, it is difficult to tempt him back to it until he is inclined to come back. On the date named, all four of the sitters, outside Margery, were struck with pinks from the table; and these flower contacts were tied up in a rapid-fire complex of others types of touches (Chapters XXII, XXV). This was doubtless the most striking performance of the sort given to this time, and the most difficult to explain away. Particularly significant is the fact that, with fewer people present, the flowers for the first time traveled completely around the table.

Flower touches were got with completely recorded control of Margery's hands on March 13, and this also marks a period. Her left hand was in Richardson's throughout, and was reported by him to be always limp and passive; F. H. had her right throughout. There were on the table initially two carnations. When these were heard to move, Mrs. Richardson expressed a desire to smell one of them. One was therefore carried "with almost lightning speed" around the circle, brushing faces and tapping heads and noses. At length it reached Mrs. Richardson, landed under her chin, and remained there. She offered to put it back on the table, but Walter said no, he'd take another. He did this, continuing the flower touches. The combination of wide spatial range and complete control of the psychic's hands is of extreme importance.

The apparatus placed before Walter on this occasion included also two ordinary wooden curtain rings. In the

middle of the sitting Walter said: "I'm just stalling you, you know. We're playing a little trick on you. John says, 'When the sitting is over, see if you can find the rings.'"

At the end, these were found in a sort of fold of the top curtain of the cabinet, so placed that they came to light only "after the cabinet had been searched with apparent care more than once." The constant hand control makes this incident, too, more than ordinarily impressive, since the contour of the cabinet is such that the only plausible explanation on fraudulent grounds would involve the use of Margery's hands.

Mrs. S. was hit with a pink on March 14, whereupon Roback reported, "It *seems* as though I, too, were being hit on the head with a flower." Walter shot right back at him, "Scientifically speaking, Doctor!"

After this sitting was supposed to have come to an end, Roback prosecuted an experiment. He sat in the cabinet at Margery's left, his left hand held by F. H. and his right free, to see how closely he could come to duplicating the flower manipulation of this and other sittings. Holding a pink in this free hand and striking out with it, he made many more misses than hits, and his hits were seldom clean—as Walter's always are. This is what I should have predicted, on the basis of the remarks of page 213. But the incident had an amusing sequel. For Margery, under what inspiration I cannot say, grasped Roback's free right hand, and the flower contacts instantly began to recur with greater intensity than ever before, in this or previous sittings. Adler, Cross and F. H. were hit in all parts of their heads with a pink, and other phenomena of the sort requiring a sense of locality in the dark were produced. Roback had dropped his pink to the floor, and another from the table was used; and it is perhaps not superfluous to add that the operator was Walter alone, not Roback under some subjective psychic influence or Walter using Roback's hand. Walter's sardonic laugh closed the incident.

Again on March 16, in a large circle of eleven members,

many were struck with the flowers. On the seventeenth, each of the six sitters aside from Margery was hit on the head by a carnation. On the eighteenth, under recorded control of Margery by F. H. and Richardson, the pinks on the table were carried about the circle, brushed against faces, tossed into laps, and used to tap the heads of various sitters. Miss Richardson reported taps on her head, alternately sharp and caressing. Ladies standing outside the circle were included in the touches, which makes it appear that we have here the widest spatial range yet recorded for this sort of thing. Once more, on the nineteenth, the floral contacts were given, to Comstock among others.

Going back to March 17, we find that in addition to the flowers, the curtain rings were again on the table (see March 13, above). One of these was picked up, rapped vigorously upon the table, and tossed over Laura C.'s head, falling on the couch beside Mrs. S.

March 19 saw more action with one of the wooden ash trays, which were now marked with luminous paint, adding visual observation of their antics to that afforded by the senses of touch and of sound. Walter apparently tried to pick the tray up as it sat on the table; the light (see Chapter XXIV) which marked his "terminal" was seen approaching it. But apparently he couldn't get under it—it slid along the table, as slippery objects sometimes do when we try to grasp them with one hand. Cross and F. H. braced their hands against it, and it was then picked up with ease. It was carried all over the region above the table, nearly to the ceiling, and then back into the cabinet, striking repeatedly against the wall of this. All its action except the last was quite out of reach of any person present, unless equipped with an instrument or standing upon the table.

The illuminated ash tray was repeatedly and mysteriously eclipsed on March 21, with no material object apparent by means of which this could have been done. When it occurred

again on the twenty-seventh, it was attributed to the use of a dark (*i.e.*, unmarked with the luminous paint) bowl which lay on the table. The tray also moved about on this later date, whether through the air or merely on the table is not indicated; and the wooden curtain ring, likewise dark, was picked up, tapped on the tray, and seen in silhouette, edgewise, against this. Then it was placed in the tray and outlined in full against the bright background. On the thirtieth with these and other small objects rather cluttering up the table, Walter picked them all up, one after another, and threw them about the room. I believe it was inferred that this represented his ideas as to their final disposition; in any event, the record does not indicate that they were again put before him.

The flowers continued to be used intermittently, however. On March 25 all four sitters aside from Margery reported touches. Again on the twenty-seventh, with a larger company, all were touched except one timid lady who asked to be omitted. And on the twenty-ninth, in the presence of McDougall and Roback, all sitters were hit on the head with pinks. The same thing happened on April 1, under recorded control by Richardson and F. H. which was continuous throughout the sitting; and "not all of these head tappings and brushings were gentle." On April 9, all sitters were touched on the head with roses; and on the fifteenth, "as usual, pinks from the table flew about and touched the faces and heads of the sitters."

About this time there began to be so many other things to which Walter's attention was desired that the flowers were often omitted. F. H. is under the impression that now and then they were present, and that when present they usually were handled in some fashion by Walter. If so, these items are omitted from the record, and I have but one more phenomenon to record here—one of those things that certainly happened, but that conceivably may have been accidental.

The date was May 11, and there was in effect a circle in

which alternate sitters were members and attachés of the *Scientific American* Committee, so that we had absolute assurance about all the hands. I felt something very light fall upon my head, and when next we had the red light, I found a rose petal on the floor behind me. I had no doubt at all that this was what I had felt; and there were no flowers anywhere in the room above me—all that were present were on the table.

CHAPTER XXII

GHOSTLY FINGERS IN THE DARK

OF the new phenomena to appear after the return from Europe and the resumption of the Lime Street routine, several were experienced immediately, in the very first sitting, on December 30. One of these I have discussed in the last chapter; and while I have shown that the surrounding circumstances grew more rigorous and hence the hypothesis of fraud more complicated with the march of time, I think I should have to concede that no single incident of that chapter is absolute in its finality. But I come now to a phenomenon which started on December 30, which has occurred periodically ever since, which still occurs at times, and which has occurred under conditions that ought to satisfy any rational critic who is not committed, in advance, to the belief that there are no genuine psychic phenomena. At the risk of seeming in spots to get ahead of my story, I give in this chapter a complete account of these "psychic contacts."

This manifestation is, of course, distinct from that described in the last chapter, when sitters are touched by the material apparatus of the seance room, psychically manipulated. It had to do with touches felt without any apparent material means for their production. They would presumably be attributed to the semi-material extensions or terminals thought of as extruding from or pertaining to the medium, and as constituting the tools employed in the physical work of the seance. This view is self-consistent; if these ectoplasmic rods are capable of moving the furniture, they ought to be capable of giving tactile stimuli.

When we are brought into the presence of such a theory,

the sensation reported from the psychic touch becomes a matter of extreme importance, for it affords a possible means of learning something about the psychic machinery. Moreover, the numerous material objects of the room can seldom be completely located at any given moment. The sensation described by the recipient of Walter's attention is then often the only means of ruling out the possibility that it is by one of these that he has been touched.

Often the psychic touch is described as resembling what would be felt from a hand, a finger, etc; often some other simile is used. Too much weight must not be given these similes; identical touches from an unknown source would lead to wide variety of statement from different sitters. If one sitter is touched "as by a feather duster," another "as by a flower," and a third "as by a handful of fur," it takes no great exercise of the generalizing faculty to infer that they may all be talking about the same thing. F. H. himself has concluded that Walter can make his touching mechanism assume any character he wishes. To just what degree such a sweeping theory would be rendered unnecessary by a careful abstracting of the fundamental qualities indicated by the statements of sitters who are touched, I must leave to the reader's judgment.

In connection with the psychic contact, the problem of ruling out fraud or the physical possibility of fraud is the same as with objective phenomena in general. That of dealing with accident and error takes here some special forms. Considerable accidental contact between sitters always occurs. When one is touched by *anything*, one announces it; and if one's neighbor is responsible, two such announcements should coincide or else the one made first should meet the statement from the slower thinker: "I did it." In every single instance when I have been touched in Margery's seances by what I *took to be* another sitter, I have had this admission; I believe it is never withheld. The rare occasions when sitter A is touched by B in such fashion that B knows it while A himself does

not could constitute only a negligible proportion of the psychic touches reported.

Other difficulties arise from the fact that in the very nature of the case a touch in the dark can be observed only by the person touched. If he is in doubt, he must settle for himself whether to report and in what terms—nobody can verify or correct or aid him. Moreover, the notions involved in individual hallucination are simple and the occurrence of such hallucination is frequent; while the idea of collective hallucination is very complex and its occurrence extremely doubtful. If it were not that psychic touches are now and then accompanied by luminous phenomena, I should be profoundly puzzled to know how to *prove* that they are not hallucinations. I should be satisfied that, in Margery's mediumship at least, they are not; but I don't believe I could advance any more convincing reason for the opinion than the statement that her psychic contacts do not feel like hallucinations! So we ought to deal a little less scornfully with the delusion hypothesis here than elsewhere, even though one who has been repeatedly touched in the Lime Street seances will inevitably receive this hypothesis with a smile of superior tolerance.

The first observation of psychic contact was made on December 30, 1923. Caldwell and F. H., who were undoubtedly closest to Margery, described soft pinches as of fingers, which so startled them that Caldwell asked for a repetition, and twice got it. The record does not specify control, but those affected surely satisfied themselves as to the whereabouts of the psychic's hands.

The incident stood alone for only twenty-four hours. On the thirty-first F. H. was touched as by a soft, caressing set of fingers, first on the left ankle, later on the right, and coming seven times in all. Caldwell made a similar report. Adler was touched at various points from ankle to knee; and at one time it felt as though a whole foot shod in felt and of light weight rested on his. Caldwell and F. H. were presumably

next the medium; Adler may have been anywhere. The tendency of the touches to come low down is fairly general, though the head, too, is often involved.

For January 1, 1924, we have a better statement of surrounding circumstances than was usual at this period. The unnamed person at Margery's right, probably F. H., joined with Richardson at her left in proclaiming *complete control of her four limbs* at moments when F. H. and both the Richardsons, in the circle, and Mrs. S., outside it, were touched. The touches were always distinct, and usually accompanied by the classic cool breezes, which are described, as they occur through Margery, in Chapter XXIII. F. H. spoke of a tugging at his trousers, a holding of his ankles, a stroking of his head; and these persisted, sometimes, for several seconds. Mrs. Richardson states: "In my case the effect was as though some soft object, like a rubber ball or an animal's paw, had been gently pressed or stroked against my calf and ankle. This was clearly done in a caressing manner, a human manner; but it did not feel like a human hand. I also felt, several times, as though a cobweb were over my face." This simile requires a cross reference to page 193.

Records made by the ABC group without outside interference incline toward the subjective. There will be long quotations or paraphrases of Walter's remarks, then a word will be thrown in as a sort of afterthought, that there were a lot of lights, or touches. The four sittings of January 3, 10, 13, and 17, all saw psychic touches, but the record adds little to this bare statement. On one of these dates Miss Scott reported a persistent tingling of her face which, if neither normal nor subjective, ought to be cited in connection with Margery's cobwebs of page 193 and the psychic contacts of the present chapter. And Walter is quoted: "To make these touches I have to take from the Kid the equivalent of a day's work." The statement is difficult to credit; she always appears to rise from a sitting in the identical physical condition in which she sat down.

A cut rose had been placed on the table for January 18. Touches assumed to be with this came on F. H.'s left hand, Adler's right hand and forehead, then in rapid alternation on both their heads and faces. The rapidity and accuracy were extreme, and suggest a reference to the general remarks of page 213. At the end, the rose was found in what was thought to be its exact original position. Walter's subsequent explanation, "I did not use your rose," was regarded by the sitters as the easiest explanation. I chronicled the incident, with the remark that if we are *going* to get psychic touches of wide variety, sooner or later we must get one that will be confusable with some material object known to be present.

On this date, Adler got contact on his right thigh, "as though Walter were sitting there"; and F. H. felt a push as of a hard fist into his left armpit and ribs. On the twenty-fifth F. H. alone was touched; no details are given. On the twenty-seventh he got a touch "as of a form" against his shoulder and under his arm. On the thirtieth Adler reported a light touch. "Yes, like a flea," said Walter. "Scratch it, then," retorted Adler. Instant response came in the form of a definite scratching upon the correct leg. F. H. on this occasion was also touched several times.

Miss Richardson, in response to her request of February 3 that Walter reach out and touch her, reported strong pressure on her foot. An even more personal turn was taken on the ninth. F. H., after some conversation with the invisible presence, remarked, "Oh, you're spoofing me, Walter." F. H. was promptly poked ten times in the ribs, as by a fist; and each time the Walter voice queried, "I'm spoofing you, am I?" Then a large and muscular hand seemed to descend upon F. H.'s head, rumpling his hair. "Whereupon," observes the record, "F. H. came as near to hysterics as a professional man should." I think we may assume that he had no doubts about the control!

The ponderous Cross was the only sitter besides Margery

and F. H. on February 12, and the touches for the first time got around to him. Both he and F. H. reported numerous touches on their faces, as of a dry, scentless flower; and these were sometimes accompanied by a crackling as of straw in Margery's lap. Cross's escape up to this time was doubtless due to his customary position opposite Margery, with the limited spatial range which the mediumship had exhibited ever since being confined to the single room.

For the fourteenth there were more flowerlike touches, felt by F. H., Brown and Mrs. Brown; and Brown's nose was mildly punched and his hair rumped. On February 16, with eleven persons present, all reported touches. There was rumpling and pulling of the hair of three persons, and some of the touches were accompanied by psychic lights (see Chapter XXIV). One is tempted to capitalize the frequent occurrence together of lights, touches and apparent attempts at materialization, into a generalization connecting these three phenomena.

I once attended a sitting with a European circle where an enormous variety of noises was produced in darkness, with a dozen sitters. I thought all the racket had been made by the sitters, each satisfied that eleven-twelfths of the action was genuine, each believing it fair enough for him to help the spirits out to the extent of eight per cent. This is a standard theory in explanation of brilliant seance results, and it must be called in if we are to attribute to fraud the touching of eleven people, seated in a circle with a table in the middle. But this theory works better with sounds than with touches. If eleven people sit around in the dark and touch one another, they *must* get tangled up sufficiently to detect one another's fraud; and surely all of them will not accept the discovery in silence. While falling short of scientific demonstration by very reason of the large crowd present, the wholesale occurrence of contact with this multiplicity of sitters gives the skeptic something furiously to think on. So does the fact that the success of this phenomenon is not a function of the num-

ber present, but maintains the same level with three and with eleven sitters.

The psychic touches took a lighter vein on February 18, in the presence of seventeen sitters—not all in the circle. Many of them were touched, but the record does not specify how many. Walter teased F. H. and others with touches which he said were from spiders, furry worms, etc. It's like that in hell, he stated. Brown in particular reported feeling fur on his lips. F. H. was stroked, pushed, caressed—even at his own suggestion given “a kick in the face.” Others, including some outside the circle, had their hair pulled, faces stroked, etc. Brown expressed pleasure at his touches, saying that they were soft and agreeable.

On February 21 touches were felt by all ten persons in the room save Adler and Mrs. Brown, on the far side of the circle from Margery. As usual the greatest number was reported by F. H. and Caldwell, at her either side. All these touches were soft, and I think probably were substantially the same. They were described as like feathers, a feather duster, a single feather, a pair of cool gloves flicked against the hands and arms, soft wool, swansdown, warm fur, a marshmallow, a soft eraser, a powder puff. The last report was followed by a faint appropriate odor; the sitters canvassed the possibility that this was subjective, and rejected it. Ultimately these soft touches were also described by several sitters as wet.

Walter spoke of Mrs. Caldwell as knitting; and Mrs. Brown said that perhaps it might be possible to feel some of the needles. Shortly after, several sitters felt distinct pricks, Brown's being sufficiently strong to last, almost painfully, for several minutes. Of some of the group I would speak less forcefully; but Brown is the last man in the world to develop this stimulus subjectively from his wife's remark.

All four persons present on February 26, including Margery, were touched on hands and on faces, now as by flowers and again as by hands. March 1 brought forth a regular

scramble of touches, mixed with psychic lights. Adler, Cross, Ekland, Roback—all were touched, Roback getting special attention. The tendency for lights to accompany the touches has been mentioned above.

The ABC group sat alone on March 2, and all seven were touched on hands and face. When one sitter described his touch, the next usually came to a neighbor in totally different aspect. Walter does this sort of thing with psychic lights, too, and seems to enjoy it. Among the similes here used, feathers and wooden door-knobs stand out in extreme contrast. Again on the seventh everybody in the room (five) was touched. Three evenings later, Mrs. Litzelmann reported being pecked at, as by kissing lips; and there is a kissing joke of which she is the butt.

During the day of March 12, F. H. remarked to Litzelmann that of ten types of phenomena catalogued by the Stainton Moses biographer, Walter had given all save the psychic odor—I presume he forgot the powder-puff incident. Both parties insist the conversation was repeated to nobody. But that night each sitter got, separately, sensations as of a bunch of hair or fur, heavily scented, held under the nose and in contact with nose or lips. The odor went unidentified, unless "a combination of rose, violet and lily of the valley" identifies it. Mrs. Yerxa announced touches on knee, skirt and ankle almost, if not quite, simultaneous with flower touches and psychic lights in other quarters.

F. H. and Richardson, on March 12, reported touches as of leathery fingers, while other sitters spoke simply of touches, all on the feet. The next night all of the four sitters outside Margery were touched. Cross made one of his characteristically foolish and credulous suggestions, and got a resounding slap over the head for his pains; he was across the table from Margery as usual. On the fifteenth, of various touches reported by various sitters, some felt wet in passing over the face.

The record for March 18 brings out an interesting variant. The curtain pole (dark) had got mislaid, and Richardson suggested that John look for it. He soon felt something like a hand moving up his arm, as though searching.

This was apparently the first of many occasions on which Margery complained of the presence of something under her chair. It felt like a cat rubbing her legs, she said. This, with the use by sitters of fur and furry ideas in description of the psychic touches, finally established the "psychic cat" as one of the standard jests of Lime Street.

March 21 saw McDougall on one side of Margery and F. H. on the other. McDougall's control earns the designation "fierce." Once he held Margery's legs between his so long and so tightly that his sensations were numbed, and he expressed uncertainty whether it was her extremities or those of the table that he had in his custody. On the date mentioned, under control of this sort, he was touched several times.

For the next few nights Goodall was present oftener than before or since, and touches when they occurred centered about him. On March 25 he felt a caress as of a gloved hand on his ear; F. H. got the same thing on his head. Goodall, on April 1, sat in the cabinet with Margery, on another chair; he was "pushed as by a force" and his hair was rumpled. On the sixth, sitting in the same way, his hair was again played with.

I sat at Margery's left on April 11, in a circle of only five, including her. With my hand control intact on both sides of me, my hair was pulled. If either of my neighbors had a free hand on the side away from me, which I do not believe, but which presents a physical possibility, the hand clasp with me would afford data for locating my head. I shan't labor the point, however, for I come to incidents where it does not exist.

Some of the phenomena of Margery's mediumship have started feebly, worked up to a maximum, and then either

become standardized or neglected and dropped. The touches, on the other hand, have varied little from the start, save in the breadth of simile which they have provoked. Sometimes they occur and sometimes not. Sometimes they run strongly through a number of sittings, sometimes a period passes with nobody touched. Hence the only climax toward which this chapter can be pointed is the getting of touches under irreproachable conditions. A step in this direction was made on April 12, when, for the first time, I was posted outside the circle, behind the space between F. H. and Margery, to see that all in that space was as guiltless as it should be. McDougall was at Margery's right, controlling her one hand and both her feet. The fact that under these unique conditions we got a brilliant performance in every direction is strongly indicative. Moreover, with my head as low as my position on the floor would imply—lower, even, than that, when I leaned forward to control F. H.'s feet—no attempt was made to pull my hair; which is strongly suggestive again of genuineness.

Still another novel factor was here introduced, in the presence of Roback, free to wander where he would in the room in search of fraud. He did this so quietly that I never knew where he was save when he touched me accidentally; and the others testified similarly. Several times Roback had to claim touches announced by one sitter or another; but he disclaimed a tapping as of fingers on McDougall's head and a stroking as of soft fingers on his knee.

Even stronger in its insulation was a contact which I got. My foot was accidentally extended, for a moment, into the space beneath Margery's chair—surely without her knowledge, since I touched neither leg nor rung. This foot got a contact which was so completely what I should have felt from Margery's stockinged foot that I asked McDougall to verify his control of both her feet. This he did. It was not her skirt or any other garment hanging down, for it met my foot with too firm an effect for this. It was not the rung or any other

part of the chair, for it yielded to my touch and was withdrawn as I made my announcement. There is, in my judgment, no escape from genuineness here.

For a month after this only one touch is recorded; on April 21 Goodall's hair was pulled and Golding was touched on knees and hair.

The mania for touching broke out afresh on May 12, in the presence of a roomful of competent observers. F. H., Carrington and I got it most freely; Goodall and, after she took his place, Mrs. Bird, got it to less extent. Carrington was particularly insulated against fraud; if one agree with me about Cross's hopeless clumsiness, so was I. Most of the contacts were likened to fingers; but once F. H. felt a cold touch on his right cheek, toward me and away from Margery; and he and I got our chests pushed by an indeterminate object that gave me the impression of much bulk and vigor. After this outbreak, nobody was touched for some weeks, except on May 20, when several sitters got gentle caresses.

An extraordinary contact phenomenon centered around me on June 24, as I sat on the floor in the cabinet at Margery's right, to be finally buried in the wreckage (Chapter XXXIX). In sitting thus, I have to reach up to control Margery's hand; and usually I ease this position by hanging my hand on the arm of her chair or resting my elbow on my own thigh or knee. In either event, Margery's hand is apt to be in more or less contact with my hair. This habit was probably why, on this occasion, when I was holding her hand well out on the front of her chair-arm, far from my head, I did not react at once to a sharp pull on my hair. My failure to respond in any way was doubtless the reason why the pulling was continued for about ten seconds, increasing in intensity until it became distinctly painful. When I acknowledged it, it stopped at once. It was not caused by my hair getting jammed between an arm of myself or Margery and the chair-arm, or anything of comparable nature; my head was clear of the chair, and the

pull was almost exactly at the top of my head. Physical possibility is wide open as far as Margery's teeth are concerned; but I think the moral probability of her pursuing the business of casual fraud to this extent, on a night when violent action of another sort was being had, was very small indeed. Of course I will not ask the reader to attach any consequence to her indignant denial that she was doing it so. But it was plain to me that this was the only possibility of fraud.

During early July, Carrington was present for some ten days after I had gone home and while Comstock was for the most part unavailable. McDougall was on vacation, out of town; and F. H. suggested that Carrington ask some competent person to come up from New York, so that he would not be left to deal with the case entirely alone. Carrington picked out Mr. Frederick S. Keating, a friend of his and mine, who is a very well-known semi-professional conjurer and writer on parlor tricks; and Keating accepted the invitation, staying in the Lime Street house with Carrington for some ten days. His initial prejudice, so far as it existed at all, was strongly against validity; his competence, too, fully entitles him to all the credit which an attaché of the *Scientific American* committee should have.

Several of these Carrington-Keating sessions of July were freely sprinkled with psychic contacts. On the fourth, Carrington and Keating were outside the circle at Margery's either side, and hence probably further outside the locus of fraud through confederacy (the only type available while they held Margery's hands) than if they had been in the circle. But Carrington, while standing in the cabinet at Margery's side, reported a touch on his leg, on a level with the back of Margery's chair; and Keating was also touched on the leg.

On the ninth, counting Conant and Keating as such, committee sitters alternated all around the circle, in an arrangement which must be considered fraud-proof. Yet Keating felt, first a sharp touch on his left leg, like a needle; then a series

of "catlike touches on the legs, as though by a semi-solid object." This felt at first like a wind, gradually becoming more solid, and at last gave the impression of a definite material object scraping the leg. Either the entire series or the solid finale was several times repeated—the record is not clear here. Keating was approximately opposite the psychic, with the table between them; so that even if one believed she could lean over and, with her head, touch his leg, without pulling on the hands of her custodians, this plea would be estopped by the presence of the barrier.

Keating was not the only sitter touched here. Conant felt a soft, catlike object brushing against his left leg. It occurred twice, the second time after Walter had told him to get farther from the wall of the cabinet. It felt like something crowding past him—the psychic cat again. On the twelfth, the psychic feline once more invaded the room, being felt by Carrington, at Margery's left, just before the cabinet was capsized.

There was a large friendly circle on July 20, with Adler on Margery's left and Mrs. Stewart masquerading as a scientist on the junction between her and F. H. F. H. felt a tug on his trousers, and to some extent felt the "handlike process" that did the tugging.

Sitting on July 22, in a sort of informal preliminary to the very serious affairs of the two following evenings, I was touched repeatedly, once apparently by a finger, again by something more bulky, a third time so lightly that I was not sure of it. These all came on my knee. I announced the last one with reservations; Walter said it was not he, but was the illuminated plaque. I did not believe this, knowing, as I did, where the plaque was. The touch was immediately followed by another, unmistakable, admittedly Walter, and on the identical spot. Adler's left hand was the only one that could possibly be free within reach; it would have had to do some very fancy dodging of the table and of my left arm and leg,

to get at my right knee. I had no doubt of the genuineness of these touches.

To date, the Carrington-Keating observation of July 9 was probably the most incontestable one of the psychic contact. But it was thrown in the shade on July 23. There was perfect control of Margery's hands, arms, feet and legs by Houdini on one side and me on the other; with similar control of F. H. by Conant and me; and all other persons in the room were of the committee. I had a free hand with which I maintained intermittent control over Margery's head; Houdini and Munn broke the circle between them to give Houdini a hand secretly free for exploration. Houdini was several times touched on the right leg. He refrained from announcing them; Walter claimed them, and stated with the utmost nicety where they had fallen—inside the right knee. Houdini verified the statement. This is one of the items that Houdini does not bother to "explain" in his scurrilous "exposure" of the mediumship. Next night, sitting with identical arrangements in Comstock's apartment, much the same thing happened. The dictaphone record detailing the control appears in Chapter XLVIII.

Later in this sitting, under the same absolute control of all sources of fraud, I was stroked as by a feather, up and down my little finger, while the table was in motion; the contact passed to my leg, then to my knee. I shall contradict, later on, Houdini's claim that Margery's head was under the table, engaged in "levitation"; but it is interesting to note that had this claim been a permissible one, the first of these touches would have been too remote to have been due to Margery's hair, and the third would have been on the other side of an impassable obstruction.

Returning to Lime Street we had a friendly sitting on June 27, with Murray sitting at the psychic's left and me in my usual place between her and F. H. Murray was showered with psychic contacts on his thigh, his head, his chest. In the

same position, when I have been touched, I have put the sole physical possibility of fraud up to the left hand of my left-hand neighbor. This could have conceivably got to the top of Murray's head; but hardly could have evaded a sensible man's guard to attack him in the other places named.

On August 12, Damon will be found in the circle a very long distance from any possible confederate, and in control of Margery. He had both her legs regularly, and at all crucial moments both her hands. While he was thus controlling her completely and while her head was located by her talking to him, he got various touches on his arm, knee and leg. I suppose even Houdini, in spite of his recent insulting dealings with her, will hardly claim that Margaret Deland is a confederate.

Careful canvass of the above will show contact phenomena under dates of January 1, February 14 and 21, March 21, April 11, July 22 and August 12 under excellent conditions of determination; on April 12 and May 12 under even greater rigor; and on July 9, 23 and 24 under conditions that leave no loophole through which escape may be made from the conclusion of genuineness. I think we may fairly say that this chapter of the mediumship leads to a climax.

CHAPTER XXIII

ARCTIC BREEZES FROM NOWHERE

ONE of the classical concomitants of physical mediumship is cold breezes, blowing inexplicably out of the cabinet or from the neighborhood of the medium. In the case of Palladino, Carrington has described how, during the occurrence of other phenomena, one could place a hand above her head, and feel strong cold currents of air, the effect being as though they issued from a cranny in her skull. The penny-wise investigator who finds all phenomena necessarily fraudulent, and lacking only the explanation of how they are done, will tell us that Palladino produced these winds by distorting her upper lip and blowing in such a fashion that the breath passed strongly upward. Carrington will ask in rejoinder how this could possibly be done in good light without the investigator's knowledge; and of course the explanation is silly on its face, assuming, as it does, utter fatuity on the part of the persons who are represented as having been thus taken in. Indeed, if any single phenomenon of objective mediumship is on a solid basis through existing literature, it would be the item of cold breezes.

Margery's early seances were free from this phenomenon. But immediately after the return from Europe, curious behavior of the cabinet curtains was observed, which would be best explained on the assumption that these were being blown outward by strong blasts of air issuing from the cabinet. Thus, the record for *December 30, 1923*, tells us:

"The curtains were blown out several inches. The gentle swishirg was heard distinctly at the back of the room, and

the movement was felt by those near it. The ends of the curtains were at last carried up and deposited in a sort of coil, one on the table and the other on Caldwell's head." Margery was fully controlled during this time, as announced by those sitting next her.

Again, on the thirty-first, the dividing curtains were repeatedly lifted as though to get them out of the way of the region from the psychic's knees, down. On January 1, 1924, for the first time, a new arrangement of the cabinet was in effect, whereby the curtains were draped across the top of the cabinet instead of hanging down in front; and during the sitting, there was felt much cold air, blowing out of the cabinet, and taken as a confirmation that it was really in this way that the curtains had been disturbed on the preceding two nights.

This cold air is not again recorded for some time, though I have an idea, supported by F. H., that it was now and again observed without getting into the record. But on March 18, we read, strong blasts of air came out of the cabinet at a moment when Walter was protesting against the odor of the luminous paint, used here for the first time. And again on the twenty-fifth, not only was the cabinet very cold, with strong blasts of cold air coming out of it throughout the sitting, but Margery's hands were extremely cold from start to finish.

April 11 saw strong, cool breezes, apparently simultaneous with and in some way connected with the psychic lights of this occasion. I was present, and found this suggestion an inescapable one. Again on the twelfth, the lights were often, though not invariably, accompanied by breezes. These were of considerable force, distinctly cool; and I recorded the judgment that they were unquestionably objective, and unquestionably neither accidental nor due to any cause outside the seance room. Once on this evening, but once only, there was a heavy wind without any light at all. The breezes came from all quarters of the cabinet. I was in the best position to observe them, and I got them repeatedly and strongly in my

face, at times when Margery's face was plainly located, by her talk, her yawn, her breathing or other means, as somewhere other than in the region whence I was getting blown upon.

It was shortly after this that the pronounced cold winds led F. H. to conceive the idea of duplicating, with Margery, Harry Price's observations with Stella C. Briefly, these were as follows:

A maximum-and-minimum thermometer was mounted in the seance room. At the end of the sittings, this instrument always showed the effect which one would expect through the operation of normal causes in a sealed room occupied for two hours by ten or a dozen people. That is to say, the final temperature would be one or two degrees higher than the initial reading. But the sensations of the sitters told them that, during the height of the physical phenomena in the middle of the seance, the room was decidedly cooler than initially; and the thermometer bore this out. Whenever there was vigorous physical action, the minimum temperature shown was lower than the initial reading. In extreme cases the drop was as much as 20.5, 11.5 and 11 degrees Fahrenheit. The investigator points out that an extreme expenditure of energy over a brief interval would not affect the temperature appreciably, but that a more moderate expenditure, long continued, would do so; and it has been in this direction that I have always looked for an explanation of the phenomenon. The psychic must get from some source the energy used in the physical effects of the seance; and if we observe a thermal unbalancing of any description, we surely have a clue to the source from which she does get it.

Some of my readers will be familiar with the maximum-and-minimum thermometer here involved, which has two elbows in place of the single tube. As the mercury goes up in the one, it goes down in the other; and each column of mercury carries at its upper end an iron float. As the fluid

rises, it, of course, carries the float with it; but as it falls, it leaves the float stranded against the walls of the tube. The result is that, until reset, each float goes to and remains at the point corresponding to, in one case the highest, in the other case the lowest, temperature reached during the interval for which the instrument is used. Prior to using, both floats are brought down into contact with the tops of their respective mercury columns, by drawing a magnet downward along the outside of each tube.

F. H. got one of these instruments, and it went into use late in April, being hung on the inside of the cabinet, at Margery's right, and set before each sitting. But the thermometer of this type was open to the very real objection, from the standpoint of rigor, that if Margery brought a magnet into the seance room with her, secreted in her clothing, and if at any time during the seance she had a free right hand for a few seconds, she could easily locate the thermometer on the cabinet wall and send the float kiting up the minimum side.

The observations with this thermometer, therefore, depend for their strict validity upon the hand control throughout the seance—*throughout*, and not at any given moment or moments. I have attended sittings where there would have been no opportunity for fraud of the type specified; for if it is to be performed at all, it must be done by Margery. Nobody else could possibly get within range. But I have attended other sittings in Lime Street where, due to accidental stoppage of the Victrola, to a telephone call, or to other causes, Margery's right hand was free for a more or less alarming period. Of course nothing would happen during that period, and the freedom was not a thing that could affect the generality of the phenomena; but here was one that it could affect.

Nevertheless, the mercury thermometer was the only one available for the time being, and it was therefore used; there was, of course, no slightest belief by the ABC sitters that Margery was using a guilty magnet on it, and I would

not be understood as implying that she was. There is nothing about the temperature in the record for April 29, but I had a letter from F. H. stating that the thermometer recorded a drop from 69 degrees to 44, Fahrenheit. For May 2, the record tells us that the initial temperature was 72 degrees, and the minimum shown by the instrument 44. Walter talked about this manifestation during the sitting. He said that he took his force from the brains of the sitters, and that he often found these distressingly inadequate. The exact connection with the thermometer readings was not at this time made clear, but the missing link was supplied next night, when Walter said:

"For this work tonight I shall have to use the Kid only, because I find your brains in such poor condition. When I use your brains, there are cold breezes and a drop in temperature. When I use the Kid alone, neither of these effects is produced. You will notice that there will be no breezes tonight and the thermometer will not go down." The event justified the positiveness of the prediction.

On May 4, however, a fall was recorded from 68 to 42 degrees. The thermometer remained in use, but is not mentioned again until the eleventh, and I infer that on the evenings in this interval Walter found no brains in the circle. On the last-named date, he indicated that he was using the thermometer himself, as a register. Where the sitters put it in the cabinet to measure the effect of Walter's performance on the temperature, he uses it, so he now said, as a meter of the physical conditions confronting him. He looks at it, and if it stands steady, he knows he must use the Kid alone; while if he finds it going down, he knows he has brains in the circle to use. This use of the thermometer as a measure of the sitters tickled Walter immensely, and tickled the sitters even more. On the present date, Walter said:

"Have a good time for fifteen minutes, and I will see if I can use your brains. . . . Whee-e; the circle is overflowing

with brains; gather up the fragments lest all be lost." The record in fact showed a big drop, and hence a circle "overflowing with brains."

Although nobody suspected Margery of using a magnet as outlined above, it represented a physical possibility that had to be guarded against; so F. H. invested in a duo-metal thermograph. We found a model whose clock ran at a sufficiently rapid pace to spread the two hours of the seance over a considerable area on the recording paper. The works were entirely enclosed, and absolutely fraud proof. This instrument was installed in the cabinet for the seance of May 15, but it lasted only a few minutes. Its ticking was so loud that F. H. could not hear the Walter whispers effectively, and he and Walter were agreed that it must go—Walter being sufficiently profane about it to leave no doubt that his decision was final.

For several evenings there was no attempt to get the temperature record. Then the mercury thermometer came back, in a cage of mosquito netting which made it impossible to approach it closely enough with a magnet to affect the position of the floats. It had to be unlocked and taken out to be set before the sitting; then it was hung, in its cage, in the cabinet. This assembly was used regularly for some days and intermittently thereafter; and it never showed any drop in temperature. This, of course, the skeptic will connect with the fact that fraud has been prevented. Walter, however, at about this time, evening after evening expressed the greatest disgust with the variable make-up of the circle. He said that this factor presented a problem that would involve so much time and study on his part that he was abandoning the effort to make anything out of the circle, and was using the Kid alone as the source of his force. Under these conditions, on his own statement, the instrument ought not to show a drop. This is not quite so fatuous as it might seem, in view of the fact that Walter's protests against the practice of never having the same

circle for two consecutive nights, made in precisely the above terms, considerably antedated the thermometer episode. But of course I would not have any reader accept the validity of all this against his own better judgment.

Regardless of the thermometer business, however, the cold breezes continued. From May 29 to June 1, inclusive, in Lescarboursa's presence, we had four very mediocre sittings, at which everything else seemed at very low ebb. But Lescarboursa, always at Margery's left, close to the cabinet, was continually reporting cold winds, throughout the four evenings; and though he saw nothing else which there was any necessity for him to take seriously, he was satisfied that we had exhausted the possibilities of fraud and accident in connection with these breezes, without result. Often on these four evenings Carrington and I would be able to verify or supplement his reports. Once Carrington and Lescarboursa reported an unusually vigorous blast at a moment when Margery was involved in heated argument with another sitter; and again, at a moment when the Walter whisper was speaking. Again, Lescarboursa felt the cold breezes continuously for fifteen minutes while we sat in red light. We made every test to learn whether the wind came in from outside the room, and found that it did not. In further pursuit of the matter, Margery breathed warm air down my neck or into F. H.'s face at a moment when Carrington verified Lescarboursa's report of pronounced cold winds on the other side of the cabinet. Sometimes I would be in the cabinet with Margery, and able to say that the cold breezes were confined to her left-hand side; and when this was the case, I usually could testify that her face was not turned conspicuously toward Lescarboursa, save when she was talking to him. On one occasion the wind was so strong in all quarters of the cabinet that I felt it heavily and it ruffled F. H.'s hair beyond me. On May 31, Lescarboursa found the cold air issuing from the cabinet in such volume that he put an exploring hand inside; and he found it

distinctly colder within than without. Lescarbours's hands are normally hot and damp to a degree which embarrasses him in his social contacts. On numerous times during these four evenings, Carrington and I verified that while his left hand, in Carrington's grasp, was in this normal condition, the one which Margery held was chilled to an icy temperature—positively uncomfortable for us to touch, in fact.

We were all thoroughly satisfied of the genuineness of these air currents. No explanation was ever had of their concentration on these four evenings, unless it be that so little else was happening that we were able to concentrate upon this one series of observations.

The record is wholly silent about one curious feature which fits well here. Often when cold winds are blowing, Margery complains of a feeling as though cobwebs were over her face. It annoys her greatly, and one hears her irritable "pf-pf-pf" as she tries to blow them away. Having said this, I ought, I suppose, to insist that this is not done to cover her production of the breezes with her mouth. If the preceding paragraph does not make this clear, I can testify that she never feels the cobwebs until after the breezes have been blowing for a while. The chapter on Psychic Contacts refers to one or two analogous experiences by sitters other than Margery.

After the four sittings with Lescarbours present, cold winds were not again recorded until June 24, the night on which the cabinet was dismembered with me in it (Chapter XXXIX). Mrs. Richardson, four feet from the cabinet and in front of it, reported a coolness, rather than a definite wind, from it. On the twenty-sixth, again, for about five minutes in the middle of the seance, several sitters reported vigorous breezes. I was in the cabinet, and dropped my hand to explore; I found the effect stronger high up than low down, but distinct at all levels. Carrington reported that it was not observable at the left of the cabinet. After this, cold breezes are mentioned on July 11, in Comstock's apartment; and again

on July 27, the night when Walter sulked and would not talk to us. This finishes them, so far as the record goes, but I am certain that they have been felt since. The chapter, however, has surely shown to every reader not insulated against the facts, that they are objective and genuine, so I do not know that it involves any loss to stop it here.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ADVENT OF THE PSYCHIC LIGHTS

DOMINANT among the new ideas infused by the European experience was keen desire for materialization. F. H. came home convinced that this was the one thing worth striving for, and that he would not be happy till he got it. The entire conduct of Margery's seances was shaped toward provoking this manifestation. Walter's consent and advice were got, and greater adhesion to darkness became the dominant note of the Lime Street seance room from this point on, for several months. Darkness, of course, is essential for psychic lights; and on Walter's side, it seemed that the new phenomenon of materialization was being approached through an avenue lined with these. Indeed, in retrospect as in the seance room, it is often problematical whether to regard a given demonstration as one of the lights or of the larger thing. Purely as an arbitrary convention, I regard all lights obtained in the early months of 1924 as part of the attack upon the bigger problem, and describe them here.

Lights were seen by some, but not all, of the twenty sitters of December 30, 1923, on ceiling and floor. These gave to one observer an appearance as of a pocket flash thrown for an instant upon the ceiling. To another the light appeared to grow in extent, then to shrink.

Walter showed a large disposition to talk about the lights and materializations, and many of his remarks must go in the story. On January 10, no lights having been seen in the interim, parley was held with him. He held out hopes for the near future. "But if you get it, don't scream or move about—sit right still." Presently, however, he contradicted this, as

he often does: "No need to keep quiet if you get materialization; yell all you want to." In the same connection he advised: "You ought to begin getting ready for a sitting twenty-four hours before. Don't omit regular occupations, but keep yourself calm mentally; in that way the battery gets fully charged." On the eighteenth he gave further advance notices. "When you see it, it will be first a luminous ball which will get bigger, and gradually develop into the whole human form. You must not get tense or cry out when you see it; but you may speak or laugh all you want to. We can walk on the vibrations made by your laughing."

On January 30, 1924, Walter instructed F. H. to take tight hold of Cross, leaving the rest of the circle as it had been. Immediately there appeared what was accepted as the beginnings of materialization, in the form of a moving light about the size of a hand. It traveled fast and slow; it danced up and down between Cross and Adler; it appeared phosphorescent, now bright and again dim; it still shone brightly under an exploring and covering hand. This went on for over half an hour. Cross suggested that it was Walter's flashlight; Walter rejoined with some fervor that it was actually his body. Toward the end it took the vague outline of a hand. Then Walter showed a luminous something which he said was his eye; the record fails to indicate just how closely it resembled the organ of sight. "Do you want to see it wink?" he asked; and proceeded to "wink" it by flickering its light. In the course of time he built up a name for this manifestation as his "all-seeing eye," and established the maxim: "When you see that eye wink, look out for yourself."

Light phenomena lasted for half an hour on February 1, during most of which time Caldwell had both Margery's hands at her left, and Brown both of F. H.'s at his right, the circle being broken between F. H. and Margery. This means of control for critical instants became very common at a later epoch. Clearly visible by those nearest Margery, by those

opposite her the lights were seen only momentarily, in indistinct blurs, the distance being some eight feet. From F. H.'s seat and from Brown's, next him, a well defined, almost rectangular bar of soft radiance was seen, perhaps four inches long and two wide. First seen on Margery's breast, it stayed mostly on her left side above the shoulder, so far as could be judged. It was invisible to her. Occasionally it moved to her right side. Adler, next to Caldwell, saw it only once or twice.

Mrs. Richardson informed Walter that it was John's birthday, and Walter said something taken to indicate that John was engineering the light, which waved back and forth in recognition. A voice, taken for John's, then said: "This is for mother"; and the light traced his name, "Jack," in the air.

Six out of nineteen sitters saw a faint light on February 3; some of the others were sure it wasn't there. Those who saw it were positive, though even to them it was barely visible. It was likened to a floating cloud or mist, in the cabinet; it moved about, horizontally and vertically, without leaving the enclosure. It expanded and contracted, and once seemed to take the shape of three bars. Walter insisted it was his body that he was trying to show.

Of twelve present on the seventh, all but one or two saw lights of a different sort. They varied from a bright spot to a larger glow, of greater or less brilliancy. Again they looked like flat flames, being likened to the angular shapes of a Cubist painting by several sitters who felt that, though the edges were not sharp, this was the best simile. Generally they were visible only from one side of the circle at a time. All agreed that they were in the cabinet. As previously, the light was so dim as to be invisible from a few feet away.

Walter, on February 9, delivered an illustrated lecture on the lights, to the restricted circle of F. H., Cross and Adler which so often got good results. He stated that in the attempt to materialize, certain symbolic lights would signify each a dif-

ferent spirit. An eye would be Walter; a crescent, Adler's mother; a pair of thin lips, F. H.'s grandmother; thicker lips, Cross's mother; a rectangular figure, John; a star or approximation thereto, Mark. Then he proceeded to demonstrate. The "eye" danced about, went close to F. H., and winked. The thick lips moved over toward Cross, moving as though kissing, and making a metallic click as of finger nails. The crescent danced near Adler. John and Mark were omitted entirely.

On request, Walter produced a luminous finger on the table; it showed the bones as in an X-ray photo, anatomically correct. It raised and lowered on the table like a gavel, making a tap as it came down. Then a luminous mass like a fist went over the side of the cabinet, five feet from the floor, with a resounding blow that was heard six times in all. "The best sitting yet," was the verdict here.

Cross and F. H. were the only sitters on the twelfth. "He showed us three fingers of his hand on the table, and the side of his face with nose and eye. He showed us a single eye which opened and shut audibly and visibly." All these were luminous, of course. There is no indication of how well drawn they were; nor is it made clear whether a visible effect is involved when "his hand went over and took hold of F. H.'s arm palpably."

Walter produced the all-seeing eye on February 14 and numerous simple lights, in pairs on either side of Margery. He tapped on the table with a visible finger—anatomical verisimilitude not recorded. Winking his eye, he accompanied the flicker with the words: "Open; shut. Open; shut."

There was a very large circle for the sixteenth. The eye stuff was continued, and many lights presented, not described in detail. These were accompanied by numerous psychic touches. Again on the eighteenth, lights were seen intermittently throughout the seance.

The next advance came on February 26. A light the size

of a palm first appeared. After two minutes Walter said, disgustedly: "How many times must I tell you damned fools what to do? I told you that after the lights establish their appearance, you are to break the circle at the Kid's right." This done, the lights gained brilliancy. Walter then undertook what he called some "scientific stuff." To the several sitters there appeared one light, two lights, no light, each constantly reporting differently from the others. "Laughing sardonically, Walter made the lights appear singly, doubly, or blank, to whom he would and at his own sweet will." "Want to see my hand?" was his next move; and there appeared a patch of light about three inches by four, the black silhouette of four fingers showing across it. After repeating this several times by request, he picked up a rose from the table and silhouetted it against the same light.

To demonstrate again that the phenomena were not a function of Lime Street, a sitting was held on February 29 at the Litzelmann residence in Cambridge. Margery sat with her back in a bay window; and after a while, her outline was visible against the curtains by the light that filtered in. There was no cabinet; but Walter came at once with his lights. He showed a new kind of clover-leaf arrangement, with subdivisions of different intensity. At one time when the light went high, with Margery's hands held by F. H. and Litzelmann, a black armlike extrusion could be made out, reaching from Margery's shoulder and terminating in the light. One would have thought that this would offer suggestion for future experiment with means for silhouetting Margery vaguely to the others, but F. H. is very obtuse to suggestions that lead away from his own desires. During part of this sitting, some of the group thought they saw a dark form standing between F. H. and Margery. It was none of the sitters; the claim that it was a confederate from without would have been a little more plausible had it happened in Lime Street.

March 1 brought forth the usual lights, in Roback's pres-

ence. On the seventh large areas of light, perhaps not so bright or dense as before, but larger and more cloudlike, were regarded as "undoubted progress toward materialization." On the ninth, there was a brilliant display to ten persons of the "scientific research" as first seen on February 26.

The lights began early and lasted all evening on March 13, with short intervals of absence. They moved about a good deal. A single light was first seen near Margery's head, advancing later toward the middle of the table, where it remained a long time. Repeated observation of the lights simultaneously with touches, noises and movement of objects, and in the vicinity of these phenomena, made this one of the most important sittings to date.

Loud raps on the cabinet were accompanied by flashes of light at the spots where the raps seemed to be. When Walter took a pocketbook from Mrs. Richardson's hand (Chapter XXVII), not only was the light seen hovering near the spot, but Mrs. Richardson described a sensation as of hand or finger contact. These lights were at times as large as a dinner plate; sometimes with one edge clean cut and the rest nebulous; sometimes shaped in general outline "like the upper part of a face." (Of course this simile is anything but a definite one.) Brighter at times than at others, lights were seen almost constantly by F. H. and Mrs. Richardson, sitting next him; seldom by Cross and Richardson, who completed the circle in that order. Richardson held Margery's left hand throughout and reported it always limp and passive; F. H.'s control of the right was equally permanent. We have here an extreme demonstration of validity, which can be escaped only by attack upon F. H.'s good faith. The absence of Adler, against whom the accusation of confederacy would be less absurd than against any other sitter, when judged on grounds of opportunity plus apparent mental capacity, is particularly happy.

There were good lights on March 14. Next night there

was another demonstration, under the same recorded control. The first light appeared in F. H.'s absence, while he was at the telephone; whether control was shifted to Mrs. Richardson, who probably sat next him, or dropped for the time, does not appear. The light was unusually bright. From one side of the circle it looked like a disk, six inches across; from the other, across the table, like a bar about six inches by two. When F. H. resumed his seat, a light appeared, of rectangular or diamond shape, remaining, off and on, for the rest of the evening. Walter confirmed the inference drawn from this, that John was in charge. It stayed in almost the same spot for a long time, on the table or in Margery's lap. During other phenomena it continued to shine, sometimes moving and sometimes not. F. H. thought he saw a form, perhaps a finger, pass across it; Walter said no, it was due to waves of ectoplasm. This is one of the most intriguing remarks ever recorded from Walter; if ectoplasm exists, I should very well think it might partake sufficiently of the immaterial to have wave properties. The John light would divide, unite and divide again, retaining always its generally diamond-shaped outline.

Twelve sitters of March 16, some present for the first time, saw Walter's "scientific research." On the seventeenth, with seven present, the light was very clear during much of the sitting, and followed the other phenomena in time and in space as it had done on the thirteenth. In handling a pocket-book, Walter "got out his eye" to see the money therein; and the record states that "the eye could be plainly seen in the center of the light." On the eighteenth there were nine sitters; the light came, not so bright or so clearly defined as sometimes, but constant. It remained most of the evening on the table, moving about only occasionally. On the twenty-first, "scientific research" was displayed; and Mrs. McDougall was accused of clairvoyance on reporting a "blinding light" which none others could see. On the twenty-seventh, the lights

appeared, but were very dim; again on the twenty-ninth, in the presence of the McDougalls and Roback, there were lights, large but relatively faint.

Once again we have, for April 1, a recorded statement of continuous control by Richardson and F. H. To several sitters the light appeared to come closer to true materialization than anything yet seen. It was not very bright, but took various shapes, and at times was in as many as three parts. "These suggested a dimly lit head and shoulders; more precisely, as though about to become head and shoulders." So runs the record; it sounds like reading of the expectations into the perceptions. At times those on one side of the table could see this light, at times those on the other. It moved up and down, in and out of the cabinet; it hovered over the table; it came very close to one or two of the sitters. In the midst of encouraging comments Walter said that this was very hard to do, and soon the light disappeared without warning. But again, just before the good night, Miss Richardson reported that lights looking much like a face approached her closely.

Mention of lights is made, perfunctorily, in the records of April 3, 5 and 6. For the eleventh I am myself guilty of the same absence of thoroughness; the lights which I saw on this date appear only by name in my record as in F. H.'s. But for the sitting of the twelfth, held, as detailed on page 180, under full control of the psychic's hands and feet by myself and McDougall, plus patrol of the room by Roback, I made the following notes:

"Lights occurred on a liberal basis for perhaps an hour, variable in brightness, in size, in shape. The shape was not always clear enough for observation. It was not at all unusual to get a vertical movement of two feet—sometimes down first usually up and then down. Horizontal range of motion was not nearly so great as vertical. But horizontal range of location was considerable, and probably greater than vertical. Some of the lights were certainly very close indeed to the

psychic; some were well out over the table. There was considerable variability of observation on a given light as between two sitters, particularly with reference to whether it was visible at all. Sometimes eclipse by a head or other opaque object might explain this, but certainly not always. The lights were often accompanied by breezes, of considerable force, distinctly cool, and certainly objective," as related in Chapter XXIII.

So far as the lights of the present chapter are concerned, occurring more or less out in space and free from the psychic, this is the climax both of performance and of proof of validity. Or rather, it is probably not the actual climax of occurrence, for I take it that some of the earlier displays went beyond this one; but this sets a climax of performance and observation combined. After this date, too, occurrence of lights was very sporadic for some weeks. They are recorded for April 17, without comment; and for the twenty-first, with no further characterization than is carried by the use of the adjective "lovely." On May 12, several lights were observed by Carrington and myself, about the size of one's palm, and appearing always to move approximately in a circular arc. Carrington got a distinct impression of their flatness; we both agreed that some of them came too high for any ordinary theory of fraud.

May 15 gave a brief demonstration that should be mentioned in connection with the conditions of control; Prince was at Margery's left and Comstock at her right. Lights were seen by Prince and Margery, on their joined hands, which were visible to no other sitter. Three more fugitive observations will then complete the tale. On May 19, I was in control on Margery's right and Carrington on her left, when he saw one light and Mrs. Brown another—both close to Margery. And again on the thirtieth, Carrington reported three minute lights, of firefly appearance, over the east pan of the scales that stood then on the table. Next night I saw what I took to be another of them.

Psychic lights occurred after this, but in an entirely different fashion and in apparently an entirely different connection. I therefore suspend the account here, and will take it up again later. It will be found that psychic lights, in Margery's seances, usually occur in such a way as to permit the assumption that they are not themselves the explicit thing being aimed at by the guiding intelligence, but constitute rather a means to some other end, an incidental display of the properties of the psychic force or psychic structure which is being used for the production of some other effect. Toward this assumption I incline rather strongly, at least as regards a considerable proportion of Walter's luminous effects.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PSYCHIC LIVE STOCK

WITHOUT a few words of warning, the average reader would finish the present chapter in a state of bewilderment whether to regard it as serious psychic stuff, as comedy, or as lunacy. The answer is that I hope it isn't lunacy, but am satisfied that it is both comedy and serious psychics. It describes phenomena which are of such character as to make the hypothesis of their fraudulent production in the presence of the slightest degree of competent observation an utterly absurd one. But when, taking them to be genuine, we perforce quote what the control tells us of their origin, we must do so with minds carefully focussed upon the fact that the Walter personality is a very jolly jester when the mood so moves him. The phenomena—yes. Susie and Ninnicoop and the rest of them—well, hardly. What we have to deal with is a very curious type of psychic light, about which the Walter personality chooses to hang a structure of humor. Let us take the serious part seriously, and the humorous element with appreciation.

After the extraordinary display of psychic lights and partial materialization of February 26, 1924, there appeared two triangular areas of light, with curved angles, like butterfly wings. These manifested a far more active motion than the generality of lights had done; and with this motion there came curious noises. The only satisfactory description of the combination of light and sound lies in the simile of luminous wings, with their visible and audible flitting and flapping through the space above the table. The two "wings" would hover, always together, over the roses on the table; they would pick

up one of these and approach a sitter and hit him over the head with it; they would flutter over to the side of the cabinet and tap thereon.

The resemblance to some sort of flying creature was quite inescapable, and presently the sitters took it up. One of them, speaking to Walter, remarked that the strange object acted and sounded like a bird; another suggested a beetle; Walter rejected both ideas, and insisted that it was in reality a bat—his tame bat, Susie.

Susie went through all sorts of flying and crawling antics on and over the table and against the cabinet, with running fire of explanations on the side from Walter. "Now Susie's tired. Susie's got fleas. Susie's been here before; you felt her warm fur last Sunday (page 177). Susie can travel sixty miles an hour. She lugs me around. I went to Europe on Susie."

Susie pulled the hair of all four sitters, pecked at their faces, flapped her wings in their eyes, and in general had a perfectly wonderful time at their expense. She was followed by another large, beetlelike area of light, which scrambled about the table with a deal of flapping. An eagle, hazarded the sitters. "No," said Walter, "that's my Nincompoop." After a lengthy performance by this creature Walter announced, "Ninnicoop is tired." The flapping became slow and irregular; then "Ninnie is going home now," and it stopped. The true zoölogical rank of this pet of many nicknames was never established.

Susie and Nincompoop were the most hilarious thing that Walter had done yet. Their freedom of motion and their combination of light and sound justifies their recognition as something new, something beyond the usual psychic light—something of which to make a new chapter. They and their successors have been exhibited under a control which makes it necessary to regard them as genuine. But just what to think about them, after granting genuineness, I must confess puzzles me about as much as any feature of the entire mediumship.

Susie made her second appearance on February 27. She flapped about, scratched the cabinet, rapped visibly and audibly on the table, crawled through Goodall's hair, flapped in his face, and hit all three sitters in the face with roses from the table, as before. Walter turned her loose almost at once and a short seance was had, with little other action. I must of course describe her and her colleagues in terms of the face value as set forth by Walter; anything different would involve too much circumlocution. So let us proceed, carrying our sense of humor with us.

At the Litzelmann house in Cambridge on February 29, Susie fluttered about, in faces and in hair. Prior to going across the river, Adler and Cross sat for a few minutes in Lime Street with the family, to tell Walter where to go. "Will you come along in the motor?" he was asked. "No, I'll go on Ninnicoop," he replied. But it was Susie that manifested.

Susie flapped into Roback's face on March 1. On the fourth, Walter began to play with names; the batlike creature was seen distinctly for a long period, flapping about and making all sorts of beating noises, but her master referred to her as Jimmie. On the ninth there was another shift in sex, back to Jennie. She, or he, or it, cavorted about and touched the heads, faces or hands of all eleven persons in the circle. The space she had to cover here must not be lost sight of; it makes her one of the most far-flung items of the whole mediumship.

The flying light was Matilda and Mattie on the tenth. It showed itself everywhere, rapped and pounded on the table and the cabinet, and fluttered into faces. On the twelfth the name was Ethel, Jr., apparently in honor of Mrs. Yerxa, who was present. The flapping of the wings in the faces of all the sitters was jumbled up with a series of psychic contacts and flower touches (q. v.). Whether there was actual simultaneous action in two different loci is not made plain.

The most unaccustomed sitter of the fifteenth was David Richardson, and the flying devil wore his name—David, Jr. It fluttered with a novel clicking sound, at times almost touching the sitters but never quite doing so. It seemed to hop on the table between flutters, but never remained there long. Laura C. was present on the sixteenth and served as god-mother to the psychic bat, which was now introduced as Laura, Jr. It flapped in the faces of all twelve sitters, touched heads, and conducted itself generally as the psychic bats of prior sittings.

Walter abandoned the flying lights temporarily on March 17, in favor of a brand-new trick. The curtain pole (dark) was set up or hung up (apparently by Walter, but I cannot be sure) beside the cabinet. Then Walter's "nice little tame bear Helen" slid down it quickly and scrapingly, and climbed back up, slowly and clickingly. Helen, of course, was represented to the eye by a patch of light.

For the first time, on March 18, the pole was marked on both ends with luminous paint. Walter leaned it against the table, the lower end on the floor; then the sliding-bear stunt was duplicated, with the psychic completely controlled by Richardson and F. H. The execution was not so good as the night before—John was running the show, in the presence of his parents, instead of Walter.

In Goodall's presence on March 25, the climbing, clicking bear was Harry, Jr. This time one end of the pole was set on the table, the other leaned against the roof of the cabinet, in front, the curtains being sufficient support to hold it. Harry, Jr., tobogganed audibly and visibly down, and climbed back clicking and whizzing.

March 29 brought back the flying light. Roback was at large in the room and there was a couch across the doorway. The light, now nameless, fluttered out from the cabinet, clear across the table, and into Mrs. McDougall's face.

Continuous control by F. H. and Richardson again marked

the sitting of April 1, which led up, through the sound of flapping wings, to the psychic toboggan act. Walter set the pole in place himself, the light climbed slowly up and slid rapidly down, and the usual noises were heard to go with it. Walter threw in some humorous side remarks, likening the adventures of the sliding bear to those of Goodall when he comes to face St. Peter.

For April 5 the climbing bear was Charlie, Jr., in honor of Ekland. He climbed up the slanting pole, slid noisily down, and landed on the table with a bounce. On the eighth, with Miss Richardson present, he was "Little Pattie" and "Lobster Pattie." He ran freely up and down the pole, placed at a 45-degree angle, while Walter whistled. The record makes it appear that this was the first of many occasions on which he playfully accused the Kid of doing the trick with her eyebrows. "When the lights are on again, notice how long they are." He takes great delight in making this charge in my presence.

On April 11, for the first and only time, I saw the climbing bear, under control by myself and F. H. On the twenty-first Susie fluttered and clicked and danced on the table; and Harry, Jr., climbed the pole and slid down. Since then Walter has made frequent references to Susie, and less often has mentioned the bear; but he has kept them out of the seance room. Perhaps the alteration in the psychic lights described in Chapter XLII has something to do with this; perhaps it is a spontaneous act of will; perhaps the reason is something else. Susie and Helen and the rest of them certainly lent a touch of comedy to the seances that was appreciated by most of the sitters. Perhaps this was their *raison d'être*; I describe elsewhere how anxious Walter is to have an atmosphere of laughter.

CHAPTER XXVI

LETTERS OF FIRE

IF I depart a little from the strict chronological order of the appearance of the phenomena here, it is because the incidents which I am about to describe ceased to occur at so early a date that I wish to get them out of the way before attacking something that extended further down into the *Scientific American* period of the mediumship. The present phenomena were induced by the presence of a small sheet of cardboard, nine inches by two, the surface of which had been coated with luminous paint. I do not know whether this was Walter's idea or that of a sitter—I imagine it was introduced into the seance with the twofold idea of giving him something visible to carry about, and something in the way of a bright background against which he might display dark objects. He immediately used it for quite another purpose.

Using some sharp-pointed instrument analogous to a pencil, he was heard, and perhaps vaguely seen, to rub this vigorously against the illuminated ends of the curtain pole, as though sharpening it. He then used it to write the names of each of the four sitters upon the surface of the plaque. Aleck, Fred, Kid, Doctor; these were the words. Each faced the owner as though he himself had written it in the normal way. The contact between the writing instrument and the paint resulted in a momentary brightening of the latter, which lasted just long enough to permit reading, and then faded again into the general tone of the plaque. It seems to me that the statement of the record, which credits Walter with a beautiful Spencerian hand here, must necessarily, in view of the *modus operandi*, be a flight of imagination.

This was on March 20, 1924. Again on the twenty-fifth, Walter wrote very rapidly the names and initials H. W. G. (Goodall), Roi (F. H.), Alex (Cross), Fred (Adler), Kid, each one upright before its owner. This time he used the lower end of the curtain pole as his pen. The plaque had been "activated" by an exposure of only one second to the light; hence it was only faintly luminous, and the letters did not fade into the background quite so quickly.

On the twenty-seventh the same sort of thing was started, but the telephone rang and the light had to be turned on so that F. H. could find his way out. When he came back the plaque, as a result of the fresh exposure, was too bright for this use.

Writing was done under a different procedure on April 15. A small notebook was provided, and Walter lifted F. H.'s fountain pen from his pocket, using it to write a dozen words. One could hear the pen scratching and the leaves turning over. Under later examination, four of the leaves were found slightly mussed on the edges. The legible writing includes Walter's full signature, the words "Harmony" and "Good night," and his favorite catch-word, "It's a long alley that has no ash barrel." The penmanship is stated to resemble his mother's more than Walter's lifetime hand.

Another effort was of course made in this direction on April 17, but Walter scorned the advances. A large desk pad was on the table, with twelve sheets of white paper carefully fitted in it, and a perfect jumbo of a pencil. The pencil was tossed to the floor; and each sheet of paper was separately torn off, wadded up, and thrown at the sitters. Then, in a final gesture of defiance, the pad itself was hurled at F. H., and Walter never again attempted to write.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE PSYCHIC PICKPOCKET

WALTER's minor operations took, on February 18, 1924, a turn that seems to justify a separate chapter. Ekland, sitting next to Margery, was getting an unusual profusion of psychic touches. He asked Walter to remove from his pocket, first his railroad ticket, then his watch. At once he felt a tugging at the pocket carrying the ticket, then at the other; and presently he announced that both the articles were gone. F. H. then called for attention of the same sort from Walter, and got it; his pockets were rifled of papers and these were passed noisily across the table. Mrs. Litzelmann's bracelet was next taken from her fingers as she held it out for Walter; and Frothingham's watch was lifted off his open hand and laid on the table. Several times Litzelmann felt his coat pulled, and at length Walter asked him whether he had a watch in his pocket. When Litzelmann said "No," Walter contradicted him; and search brought from Litzelmann's pocket not alone Ekland's watch, but the missing bracelet as well. The entire performance is stated to have been carried out under control, but there is no way of learning the order of the sitters. But whatever the control, we have wholesale action here, and that same accuracy of manipulation which we have remarked in previous chapters, and promised ultimately to comment upon more fully. This would seem to be as good a place as any for the general remarks thus called for.

I have attended seances by a medium whose work turned out to be wholly fraudulent—at least so far as what he did in my presence was concerned. There was an attempt here to touch all the sitters, and to do other tricks involving some

degree of localization in the dark. The performance was halting and clumsy. The gentleman sat on a chair, in the center of the room, with the circle around him, he at large at its central point, free from all attempts at direct control. He spent the first hour of the sitting in conducting a careful campaign of exploration with his long trumpet, learning and mapping in his mind's eye the position of all the sitters. There was no pretence at accuracy of contact here; ultimately his trumpet would find you and you would report a touch, but that was the only common factor in the experiences of individual sitters. If you moved after he had found you, he had to find you again, by process of trial and error. The "spirits" that moved about the room after this process were just as likely as not to tread on your toes. Everything was just about as it would be if you or I were turned loose in pitch darkness, in a room full of people and of objects.

I have sat, on the other hand, where the sequence of events was as different from this as day from night. Psychic lights and material objects, especially in Powell's presence, shoot rapidly about, all over the room, in and out amongst hands and heads and other material objects, with no preliminary reconnaissance and never a collision. One sees such a light or such an object (marked by luminous paint, of course) approaching one at alarming speed; it comes within an inch or so of one's face; it stops without striking one. One moves one's face to a new position and the experience is repeated. One places a hand on the table for the reception of something that the spirit control desires to give one; and the object in question comes cleanly into one's palm or fingers, without fumbling, hesitation, or exploration. The entire conduct of the seance, first to last, betrays every evidence of an absolute knowledge of the exact location of everything in the room. This applies, as I have intimated, to things like hands and feet and heads, which are not rigidly in the same place all the time, with the same force as to chairs and tables,

which stay where they are put unless they are deliberately moved away. It is not a matter of preliminary exploration as in the fraudulent instance cited, for the action of the seance starts at high pitch. In the case of Miss Besinnet, there has been observation by keen investigators which has led to the verdict that her phenomena are done through normal use of her hands, feet and mouth, by the dual personality which has control of her during a genuine trance. But at least one investigator who has reached this conclusion agrees with me that, even if it be correct, the perfect localization of objects all over the room, in total darkness, displayed by this medium, can fairly be described as seeing in the dark, and presumably has a genuine psychic basis.

I need not refer back to page and paragraph of the present volume to emphasize the point that the same thing happens in Margery's seances. Everything done which calls for localization of objects, hands, feet, faces, etc., is done perfectly, with no preliminary exploration and no fumbling. The entire action of Chapters XXI, XXII and XXV hangs about this theme; so does that of the present chapter; in less degree the same uncanny ability to know where things are is seen in other chapters which we have left behind us; and it will continually crop out in future pages. It is one of the strongest of the general arguments in Margery's favor, aside from the specific evidence afforded by specific episodes which have been presented under fraud-proof conditions.

The pocket-picking tricks that lead me into these remarks seemed to tickle Walter's fancy. Once having discovered their possibilities, he pursued them industriously for some time. On March 1, Ekland again tempted him, asking to have his glasses removed from his upper right vest pocket and passed across the table to Roback. Directly, his vest was unbuttoned with as little fumbling and uncertainty as though he were doing it himself; the case which might be assumed to carry the glasses was extracted; and this was handed to Roback across the

longer diameter of the table. Ekland then asked Walter what was in it and Walter replied, not glasses at all, but money. This was correct; it held a marked ten-dollar bill and nothing else.

On March 7 F. H. supplied the stimulus for more of this sort of thing. He held out, in his left hand, a pocket scissors in the case. Walter took it. Cross was assured by F. H. that Walter could not cut him with the scissors, because of the presence of the case. Walter made some remark in the general sense of "Oh, indeed"; and the scissors was heard to click and snap near Cross and elsewhere. The leather case was handed to Adler, the scissors to F. H. F. H. then held out his purse, and it was promptly taken from him, without his having said anything to inform a fraudulent operator that it had been offered. Walter remarked that it was a queer sort of purse, with no clasp; it was, in fact, a pigskin folder of a sort not manufactured in Walter's lifetime.

As the purse was taken from his hand, F. H. reports, it was grasped as by two thin pointed sheets of wood, very dry and crackly; and it was returned by the same means. Walter, in response to the direct query, said this was ectoplasm; that it could be made to have any desired "feel." Having got the purse in his possession, he said: "I must see what is in it; I will get out my eye." The eye appeared and danced about (Chapter XXIV)—a very ingenious and dramatic touch, whether you believe it genuine or faked; then Walter continued: "Full of money. Whew-w-w! Two fifties and one hundred. I think I will deport that purse." Instead of making good this threat, however, he promptly restored it to its owner; who was able, either then or after examination, to verify the statement about its contents.

Mrs. Stewart was sitting, on March 9, outside the circle, at the side remote from Margery, behind Brown and Cross and at least three feet beyond Margery's extreme reach. Her handkerchief was taken from her hand and her shawl from her

shoulders. She then, with no statement of what she was doing, held out a heavy bracelet between the heads in front of her. It was promptly taken from her and put down on the table; handed to Mrs. Brown; taken from her and put on F. H.'s head; put next on Caldwell's head at the opposite side of the circle. Then it disappeared, and when next red light was had, it was found threaded on the curtain pole, which lay on the table.

Pocket tricks were continued on March 13. F. H. put his purse in Mrs. Richardson's hand, whence Walter removed it. It was carried across the table to Richardson, who felt it in his hand; then it traveled about some more. Walter said he would open it, and sounds were heard indicating that he had done so. "You have five twenties in a paper band, two fifties, nothing smaller than a ten." F. H. knew about the paper band, but otherwise the contents were described more closely than he could have described them himself, and with complete accuracy. From my observation of the family routine I should insist that if Margery had had opportunity to examine the contents of that wallet after the doctor's return from his afternoon office hour, the occasion would certainly have been unique.

F. H. put his pocketbook in Laura C.'s hand on March 17; a patch of light was seen to move toward Laura, and the pocketbook was taken from her. There was again the sound of opening, and Walter said, correctly, "Only tens and twenties." Later all the money was removed and handed to its owner, and the pocketbook was given to Miss McKinstry; then taken from her and handed again to Laura.

Ekland's presence on April 5 inspired something a little different. He had expected to return home to Bridgeport by a day train next day; but he told Walter that he would stay over and take the midnight if Walter would put on a good show. Walter undertook to do so, saying that if Charlie would stay over, he himself would bring the money to pay for his berth. F. H. wanted to know how they might be sure the money came

from none of them; Walter said he'd mark it; F. H. suggested a star for this purpose; and Walter agreed. Next night, Walter took Goodall's keys out of his pockets, shook them about against the heads and in the faces of all the sitters, unbuttoned Goodall's vest, scattered over the table the loose change from the pocket of some undesignated sitter, and finally produced from somewhere a crackling object which he rubbed in the faces of all present before handing it to Ekland. It turned out to be a two-dollar bill, with a red-ink star in one corner. Charlie still has it, and would commit murder for it.

F. H.'s fountain pen was taken from his pocket on April 15, the top unscrewed and laid in Richardson's hand, and the business end used to write a dozen words in a small notebook (see Chapter XXVI). The writing finished, the notebook was used to touch F. H. and Richardson; then it fell to the floor. Walter also took the pencil from somebody's pocket, but it fell to the floor without being used. From the hands of F. H. and Mrs. Richardson he took F. H.'s pocketbook. Mrs. Richardson distinctly felt a touch as of a cold finger on hers, as the purse left her hand. Walter said he would take it over to his side; he thought there was enough money in it to give him a year's vacation. But at the close, it was found on top of the cabinet, outside the top curtains.

The two-dollar bill which was produced for Ekland's sleeping-car expenses is not matched in the records, but this is because something has been omitted. F. H. carries in his own wallet a ten-dollar note with the name "Walter" scrawled on it in red ink, and tells how, a week or two after the two-dollar incident, Charlie was again induced to stay for the Sunday-night sitting by Walter's promise to pay for his whole trip home. This unrecorded but very vividly remembered incident closes the chapter. I need hardly say that the ABC sitters regard these two items as regular apports, and not as samples of the pickpocket technique in the narrow sense.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MERRY WHISTLER

IF one were to attempt, in the early stages of the mediumship, to discriminate between the Walter whisper and the whistling voice, one basis for such discrimination would lie in the fact that whispered communications came in the seance room, while the whistle was almost always tied up with that aspect of the mediumship which involved the use of the lower floors of the house. With the complete abandonment of this sort of thing, the necessity arose of either discarding the whistle or revising its technique. Walter chose revision and put it into instant effect.

In the first seance under the new order, on December 30, 1923, he is recorded as having whistled in the cabinet, in time and in tune with the Victrola, which was doubtless playing "Souvenir." This he repeated twice, on request. On January 17 he whistled an obligato to the Victrola; this, too, was perhaps the "Souvenir" melody, though with the new type of whistling from the cabinet, he is confined neither to the "Souvenir" tune nor to the air which the Victrola happens to be playing. Also on the eighteenth he whistled freely to the music; and again on the twentieth and twenty-second.

Apparently for the first time, the new whistle was used on January 27 as a means of announcing Walter's presence and greeting the sitters; this became common practice. On this occasion he accompanied the Victrola very extensively; and again on the thirtieth, he whistled his "Souvenir" fragment to a new saxophone record, and gave other items of whistling as well.

The records for February are silent about the whistle,

though I doubt that it was suspended entirely. On March 17 there was a strong whistle, followed by four or five more notes, each of lower pitch than the preceding one. Perhaps the record of April 15 has reference to the same thing when it says that Walter instructed all to remain perfectly quiet for a few minutes at the end of the sitting, and then "whistled some sort of bird note, or rather three notes, in descending scale, growing continuously softer until barely audible. And I assume that we have this once more on April 17, when "for the second [?] time he whistled his lovely personal tune, full of falling cadences, quite unlike anything we have ever heard." I might interject that I will readily grant the applicability to Walter's whistling of such adjectives as "skillful"; but that I believe a more detached sitter than F. H. and his immediate friends would not so persistently characterize it as beautiful, lovely, marvelous, and the like.

Going back for a moment, we learn that on April 3, Walter broke into beautiful whistling melody, fitting it into the "Souvenir"; then he produced a minor note and fitted this in, too. And still earlier, on March 22, he had, apparently for the second time, employed the whistle to announce his arrival.

It will be understood that the whispered voice was going on all this time, doing duty as the routine mode of communication, but doing nothing that calls for special chronicling. In the meantime, the whistle was being promoted from its place as a mere bit of musical byplay, and acquiring rank as a real and serviceable part of Walter's vocabulary, relieving him of a surprising amount of the necessity for actual speech. The interpretative whistle, to borrow F. H.'s very happy term for it, has been developed to a point where Walter is able to use it to express all sorts of moods; and with it he is likewise very successful in expressing simple answers to simple questions. Pleasure, regret, triumph, amusement, assent, dissent, indifference—these are perhaps the states of mind which he puts most readily into his whistles; but they by no means limit

him in the use of this tool. Thus on April 15, in recording the interpretative whistle for the first time, F. H. catalogs scorn and astonishment among the reactions that were put across through this vehicle, which was a marked feature of the sitting. Again, on April 22, in argument with Comstock, we find Walter carrying on his end of the conversation solely with the expressive whistle; and Walter can say as many disagreeable things with a whistle as a German can with "So."

My own memorandum for April 24 reads: "Walter was slow to come; finally he whistled, and ultimately spoke. The interpretative character of the whistles, and the ability to give through them expression to all sorts of moods and specific answers, was very striking." May 9 saw another admirable performance of this character, of which F. H. says: "All through Walter's wonderful work with the balance (Chapter XXXV) he, in a way, kept us informed by the variety of his notes and the cadence of his whistled melody. We got the impression of a persistent, skillful worker who expressed every mood: surprise, progress, content, a momentary setback, solution of a hard problem, the approach of something really funny. Besides all this, he would occasionally throw in a bar of his melancholy minor melody." With the free privilege of discounting F. H.'s enthusiasm which I exercise at all stages, it is only fair to state that one need discount this outburst little.

Another incident of this character is noted under May 13, when F. H., in introducing the sitters to Walter, spoke of "the lovely young lady outside the circle." Walter gave a prolonged whistle of appreciation which I thought remarkably well done, and which must have made the "lovely young lady" grateful for the cover of darkness. And on May 20, he described an imaginary argument in which F. H. was supposed to have worsted Litzelmann. He used the interpretative whistle entirely; high, aggressive ones for F. H., and increasingly so; low weak ones for Litzelmann, gradually dying out. This must have been very funny, indeed.

Still another vocal effect which Walter has developed strongly is his laugh, which I have chronicled once or twice in 1923, but which did not reach the stage where it was really worth talking about until 1924. Its first occurrence after the European recess appears to have been on January 31, 1924. It was used as a means of initial greeting on February 3 and again on March 4. On March 27, before going upstairs, F. H. darkened the bookroom and called for Walter's assent to a proposition by his "customary laugh." The manifestation was immediately given; and again, in the seance, the "usual short chuckle" announced Walter's presence. Although the next mention of the laugh does not appear until July, these remarks fortify my judgment that it was a matter of routine like the whisper, frequently escaping record. I may say that aside from the short cheery laugh which he reserves for those that he likes, Walter has a grim, sardonic cachinnation which he couples with the mention of the names of the less fortunate ones who have incurred his displeasure.

A few other vocal incidents call for recording. On March 4, at Richardson's suggestion, the Victrola was stopped, and Walter was able to talk without it for the balance of the evening. He said that John would speak for himself here; and there came a voice different from Walter's. Though hard to understand, it was the best speaking yet had from John.

March 13 was a stormy night, but contrary to one variety of psychic creed excellent results were obtained. The voice was loud and distinct, heard by all without the usual repetition by F. H.; and once it almost broke into clear speech.

Walter is always a bit suggestible. During the sitting of April 11, I at one stage gave a deprecatory "tch-tch." Walter apparently associated the sound with a kiss. He seized upon it, and throughout the evening he was tch-ing and smacking. For some time thereafter he preserved the association between me and this sound, and was always likely to tch or smack in my presence. He did it as lately as November 18, 1924.

Walter gave an imitation of yodelling on April 15—the record does not indicate any stimulus from the sitters. He talked freely here, "stalling" the sitters, he explained, while John laid the wires for a future occasion.

April 25 brought a certain amount of both the whispering and the whistling in red light—I believe for the first time in 1924. But nothing permanent came of the gesture.

Catching up again with the whistle where we left it a few paragraphs above, we note that on May 13 Walter greeted each of several sitters with a special whistle; and while at work on the ukulele (Chapter XLIII), he swore and whistled heartily, sotto voce. The profanity is familiar stuff; Walter is fluent in all the ordinary cuss-words and in some extraordinary ones. The whistling here was unusually liberal, and tunes were rendered independently of the Victrola more freely than I had ever heard before.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE RESTLESS TABLE

WE have seen in Chapter XX that, after the return from the European trip, the table was occasionally employed as a means of greeting and communication, in the old technique of the previous summer and fall; but that the development of vocal communication soon made this unnecessary. But the table did not fall into complete disuse; Walter found plenty of scope, from time to time, for its employment as an end in itself in the production of physical phenomena. Thus, on January 18, commenting upon the proposal that the Harvard group, minus Helson, be brought into the case again in view of the European experiences, Walter said:

"Bring them in. I like them, especially McDougall. They want apparently the repetition of some simple thing. Tell them I will do this, and nothing else, for six months."

He then began tilting one end of the table in a slow, monotonous, uniform tilt; then he laughed a prolonged laugh. This he referred to again many times, on this and other evenings, always insisting that he would do that table tilting and nothing else for the scientists, until they cried for mercy. This was done with hands off the table and formed into a circle; but in the nature of the case it would be extremely difficult to be certain that no knees could have been used to produce the movement.

On the twentieth, the threat was put into more artistic form. "For six months I will do this every night (here he tilted the table with monotonous regularity twenty to thirty times); then for the next six months I will do this (the table slid back and forth perhaps twenty times, with an amplitude

of about an inch); then for a third six months I will do only this"—and the two motions were combined, with the utmost monotony, twenty times or thereabouts. This sequence one must regard as extremely clever.

While Walter never really made good on these threats, he never forgot them. As long afterward as March 14, when reminded that McDougall was coming next week, he reverted to the table tipping and did it monotonously, with constant rhythm, as though to imply that this was all that McDougall would get out of him. In the interval contemplated by this paragraph, the table lay, apparently, wholly idle, save for its sporadic use on three occasions as a means of greeting in the old way, at the start of seances. But again, on the fifteenth, F. H. reminded Walter of McDougall's impending appearance, and in this way again elicited the systematic, monotonous tilting and oscillating of the table which was to be all that McDougall would ever get. "But I wish you would give him some light, too," said F. H.; "he has never seen any." Walter's response was instant and crushing: "No, I agree with you; he never has!"

The next action got out of the table was on April 24. Before Walter's presence had been announced, it shifted sharply, first away from Margery, then toward me. Certainly Cross and perhaps F. H. thought that G. B. was with us again, until Walter's arrival reassured them.

A striking and violent manifestation with the table occurred on April 26, without anything in the immediately preceding sittings to lead up to it. Margery had been extremely ill all day with acute bilious headache, nausea and vomiting. We all tried to dissuade her from keeping her engagement for this evening with the *Scientific American* sitters, but she regarded the occasion as a highly scientific and highly important one, and she insisted that if she permitted illness to interfere with it, she would be seriously discredited in the minds of the committeemen. Though feeling that this

state of mind was itself a symptom, we yielded to it and sat. She was better as the afternoon wore on, but was still in such distress during the seance that we had to suspend once, while she went out of the room to vomit. During the sitting Walter several times remarked that the medium was poor and the circle of little or no use, but he stuck to his guns and did what he could.

There was complete alternation between committee members and attachés, and possible suspects. In addition to the resulting complete hand control all around, McDougall had both of Margery's legs in his usual viselike control; and Roback again had a roving commission to detect fraud and catch the accomplice if he could (see page 180). Walter came through whistling, at once; and when F. H. explained to him the alternation of scientists and suspects, he rejoined in tones of perfect sarcasm and despair: "The game's up!" Alternating between red light and darkness, as was now beginning to be somewhat the custom under Comstock's influence (see page 272), the seance proceeded weakly, with clean-cut phenomena few and far between. F. H. had to go at ten o'clock to remove an appendix, and I moved into the circle in his place. The thing then went tamely on to its climax.

I was sitting with legs spread apart, the end of the table tightly wedged between them, one of its legs in close contact with each of my thighs. It became evident to me that the table was tending to tilt over, away from the psychic. I resisted this for some minutes, keeping the other sitters uninformed of what was going on. I hoped to locate the point of application of the force; but though it continued to be applied uniformly and vigorously, I got no impressions whence it came. So far as my perceptions went, I was prepared to entertain the theory that the impulse was internal to the structure of the table.

At length I ceased to oppose it; and shortly the table went over, spilling the megaphone, glass jar, scales, celluloid cage

and ukulele upon the floor. There was no damage to anything, and the fragile scales, with their cage still in place over them (see Chapter XXXV), landed right side up on the floor, undisturbed save for the displacement of one pan with its weights. The bell outfit in its candy box (see Chapter XXXVI) was nearest Margery and had farthest to slide to leave the table; it remained on the table top until a second and more violent lurch sent it crashing on top of the other baggage, again with no damage to anything.

Margery's hands and feet and legs were completely controlled, and out of action. No other sitter, I was satisfied, with McDougall and myself occupying the ends of the table as we did, could have pulled the table over, away from Margery, without the use of his hands. It was physically possible for Margery to get her head under the table. But in this position, with her feet off the floor as McDougall held them, if she could exert any force at all, it would be only with violent reaction where McDougall held her.

On April 30, after ten minutes of inaction, the table was suddenly turned through an angle of ninety degrees, coming to rest on its beam end. The conditions of recorded control were not anything like those of the twenty-sixth, however.

April 26th's outburst was repeated, magnified and under even better conditions, on May 11. F. H. had again gone out to operate, and the revised circle again provided alternation of "scientists" and "suspects." Moreover, the circle was smaller, so that Mrs. McDougall's presence as a committee observer was not necessary; Carrington, McDougall and myself were enough to go around. Five minutes after we started sitting thus, with perfect *hand and foot* control all around the circle, the table tipped toward me and away from Margery, the scales and other apparatus sliding off across my knees and those of my two neighbors. The table did not capsize; it righted itself after freeing itself of its load.

The idea was general, however, that capsizing had been

prevented only by contact with the sitters on my side. So we spread the circle out as widely as possible, making it out of the question for anybody in it to reach the table with a head, and insulating the table better against the observers outside the circle, who had been shepherded into a corner by Comstock. But still the table went over again, toward me and away from Margery. It came all the way over, striking hands and feet at one or two points and forcing them momentarily apart. We set it up again and waited, but nothing more came, so we went downstairs and dictated to Miss Wood statements of the control which the committee sitters had had at the crucial moments.

McDougall: "The psychic's feet were on my right foot, and my left foot was on the dorsal surface of her feet and was not disturbed from this position. I feel very certain that the feet were not withdrawn during either upheaval. At the time of the second one I noticed a very slight jerk of the left knee, probably following the upheaval and insufficient to cause it. In both instances I am sure of the hands, one of the psychic's and one of Adler's, that I held."

Carrington: "I can guarantee that the right hand and arm of the psychic were adequately controlled throughout the entire period of the table disturbance, also Cross's one hand that I had. As I was leaning forward at the time I was also certain that her head had no part in the production of these phenomena, since I could hear her breathing in my left ear and knew that this breathing was far back in the cabinet."

Bird: "During the two upheavals I am absolutely certain of the two hands, one of Adler and one of Cross, that I held. In the second episode, when the collapse of the table caused every one to start, I was conscious of Adler's two feet departing from mine, indicating that they had certainly been in contact at the instant when the table moved. With Cross's feet in this second episode I had uninterrupted contact. My best judgment is that I had such contact with all four of these

feet during the first episode, but of this my memory is not so clear."

The undue proportion of foot control assigned me was intentional, so that those in control nearest the psychic should have the least possible number of points on which to concentrate their attention. The start which Margery gave, as observed by McDougall, was common to all the sitters; the crash of the table was very alarming. She was indignant that he should mention it, since it was obviously not pertinent. She protested that she was supposed merely to be controlled, not to be dead.

On May 13, Prince and I being in control of the psychic, the last act consisted in a complete overturn of the table, which went through several revolutions, coming to rest ultimately on its back. Some of the sitters insisted that this was done by complete levitation. I got no sensations on this point; but there were so many feet free that the incident lacked determination.

The big feature of the sitting of May 14 was, of course, the disruption of the cabinet, described in Chapter XXXVIII. But after this we got some activity from the table. It moved slightly, creaking and sliding in various ways, the effect usually being such as would be explained by the theory that the table was standing on an uneven floor and rocking back and forth on two and three legs. At first control was announced as perfect all around. A little later Carrington had his forehead on the table—the best way in the world of learning what it is really doing. He reported a tilting as though on two legs, and a sliding across the floor of a half-inch or so. But here McDougall made the reservation that his control was not perfect; why not and in what respect not he did not particularize. In any event, minute disturbances of the table like this, no matter what the control, are about as unconvincing, intrinsically, as anything that can happen in the seance room.

Table activity on a significant scale is highly sporadic, and one is really puzzled to know why it occurs when and as it

does. The next outburst came when we were sitting in Comstock's apartment, on July 24, with an ordinary card table doing emergency service. Table action started late in the sitting, after a cabinet episode had been concluded. The full record of the evening is given in Chapter XLVIII, and I need not duplicate here.

It is perhaps worthy of note that in the long series of very brilliant sittings of which I display the high spots in Chapters LI and LII, the table was ignored almost entirely by Walter, and played no other rôle than the wholly normal one of a platform on which to place the various apparatus with which Walter *was* working. I think one could with little exaggeration say that if Walter has enough other things to keep him busy, he does not bother with the table.

CHAPTER XXX

THE MYSTERIOUS RAPPER RETURNS

DURING the early part of the year 1924, Walter seemed to find the table all that was ever needed to supplement the voice in communication. There were no raps in code during this interval, and none offered for mere demonstration purposes. But on March 15, 1924, there was a violent outbreak of the latter sort. They came in series of five, extremely rapidly—on the table, the cabinet, the table again. Mrs. Richardson suggested that a tune be thus rendered, and mentioned “Yankee Doodle”; at once it was given correctly, within the physical possibilities of the technique employed. Then the operator volunteered a rhythmical phrase familiar to the elder Richardsons, and possessing a very large family significance and evidential character. It involves a syncopation so marked that its production cannot have been accidental, but it was given accurately. It is known in the Richardson family as “Down in the Coal Bin Shoveling Smoke.” The Richardsons join with Margery in scoffing the idea that she could possibly have known this private signal.

The Richardsons were again present on March 18, and again “Down in the Coal Bin” was rendered. This time John was stated to be running the show, and he gave the family signal by way of identification. It was repeated in great variety, always very fast, at times startlingly loud and again very gently. The raps forming this bit of melody came by request upon the cabinet, the table, the arm of Margery’s chair, various heads of sitters, even so circumscribed an area as that defined by Mrs. Richardson’s ring. There is no indication of her position in the circle, but she certainly was not next to Margery; the usual remarks about accuracy of manipulation are therefore much to the point.

A popular tune was rapped out here by request, and when surprise was expressed that Walter and his crowd should know it, the explanation was offered that they go everywhere, to our theaters as to other places.

It took but a murmured word from Mrs. Richardson, on April 1, to set off "Down in the Coal Bin." John on this evening was apparently excited, and inclined to get boisterous with his raps.

After attending the theater with Margery and F. H. on April 28, I sat with them for a short time. After some delay there was a fearful wallop on the table; I had all control on my side, and believed F. H. when he said the same—his state of excitement made it necessary to believe him. He took the violence to be indicative of G. B.'s presence; but Walter came in directly, and laughed at him.

Walter was very sparing with the voice on May 12—he repeatedly emphasizes that we have no idea how much power it uses up. For a while toward the end he abandoned the spoken word and used the raps code of months before. The percussions were of divergent character. Some seemed like finger nails on wood, some more hollow than that; and there was one series of loud bangs. They came on the table, the cabinet, and occasionally elsewhere. Once they occurred when both F. H.'s hands were controlled at his right and both Margery's at her left, by the technique which Walter ultimately standardized under the name "double control."

Prince, on May 15, asked for raps, under what a detached observer would feel obliged to regard as adequate control. He asked for them in stated combinations, and got what he asked for. I make clear elsewhere the extent and character of his reservations regarding the necessity of their genuineness. Carington reported a tapping on the table during the seance of June 25, but nothing further than the mere statement came of it. And this is all I need say here about the Mysterious Rapper.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CIRCULATING CURTAIN POLE

WE have seen in Chapter XIII that as used for the better part of 1923 the curtain pole at the top of the cabinet was so arranged that it could be removed only by lifting it vertically out of its sockets. It was removed in this way on numerous occasions, and since it was well above Margery's reach so long as she remained seated, such removal was frequently evidential of genuineness. But eventually the flanges got broken off; and since the removal of the pole had by then become the least striking of the things that Walter was in the habit of doing with it, there seemed no great point in replacing them. The records do not indicate at just what date the removal of the pole ceased to mean anything more than spreading of the cabinet walls.

The first mention of the pole for 1924 comes on March 9; and having then rediscovered its possibilities, Walter made a practice of playing with it almost every night over a long period. On this occasion it was dislodged from the cabinet, and thrown with the back curtains upon the table. It hit Adler sharply on the forehead; Walter explained that an elbow moved and deflected it. This explanation is in harmony with the fact that hardly ever is anybody struck, accidentally or violently, with any of Walter's material apparatus; and that usually when this has happened, it could be verified that the blow was caused by unexpected movement by the victim or some other sitter. This falls in line with the remarks of page 213 about accuracy of manipulation.

The pole was recovered and replaced by the sitters; whereupon it was knocked out again, falling this time in front of

Margery, between her and the table. Then it was heard hitting the cabinet, high up and apparently behind Margery; and later it fell into the cabinet behind Margery, having been lifted clear over her.

The next night, no noise had been heard indicating the removal of the pole, but it began to poke Cross in the abdomen. Presently it was heard to strike the floor. At the end it was found upright, behind Margery, leaning against the back of the cabinet.

The pole was taken out of its place on March 14 and used to tap gently the heads of all the sitters, the curtains having been first torn down to free it. It was found hidden inside the cabinet, covered by one of the dismantled curtains. Then, with Roback inside the cabinet for experimental purposes and Margery outside, the pole was again "wrenched out of its seat," and found outside the cabinet, to the left.

The record for March 15 emphasizes the "great skill" with which the pole was manipulated; but judging from its face, I think it means "great precision." The pole was "wrenched out of place" and laid on the table. All sitters were in turn touched on the head. David Richardson was poked by the pole at Cross's request, and was emphatic that he felt it to be the pole and nothing else. At the end, the pole was found inside the cabinet, at the left. The specific statement is made that Margery's hand lay passive in Richardson's throughout; and F. H. was in control on her right. This is the first instance of pole manipulation that is reasonably well safeguarded on the face of the record.

With twelve sitters, the pole on the sixteenth was extracted from the cabinet, used to hit the lamp in the middle of the ceiling, and to tap the heads of nearly all the sitters. The question of accuracy arises here in acute form.

March 17 saw the pole brought down and placed on the floor beneath the table. Later it was taken out and lifted above the table without any sitter's being touched; the report

does not indicate how its new position was identified in the dark. F. H. was then asked to put his hand in the cabinet and feel the pole suspended there; the completeness of his exploration is not specified. Later, all sitters were gently touched on head or face by the pole. Finally it was suspended vertically at the side of the cabinet, used by the sliding bear of Chapter XXV, then tossed over the wall of the cabinet to the other side of the room.

Luminous paint was used on the pole for the first time on March 18, both ends being thus marked; and the record includes the statement of constant control by F. H. and Richardson. The pole was "lifted from its seat," says the record; but F. H. agrees with me that at this date the flanges were probably gone, making this questionable. It fell to the floor and was raised to the table. It was carried horizontally about the circle; it touched and rapped various heads, always gently; it rapped the cabinet and the chandelier; then it came back to rest in slanting position, one end on the table. An attempt to replace it in the cabinet failed; it fell to the floor beside Richardson. The results of this sitting were so much more satisfactory than those of any previous experiences with the pole, that for a long time the luminous paint was never omitted—not, in fact, until Walter ceased using the pole regularly. This performance easily supersedes that of the fifteenth as the one to date on which the genuineness of the pole work can best rest.

The pole was three times stood vertically on the table on the twenty-first, in the face of McDougall's fierce control.

On March 22, with one of the very small circles which so often get maximum results with Margery's mediumship, there was exhibited a waving of the pole over the region of the table, and in and out through the circle, which was felt to be more elaborate than anything previously seen. Then the pole was passed through the string of the illuminated plaque (see Chapter XXVI), and the two objects were lifted together and waved

gracefully up and down in the air, with frequent eclipsing and silhouetting of the one by the other. The string in question was attached to the plaque like the wire to a picture, so that it could be hung up if desired.

After being used for the climbing bear episode on March 25, and for writing on the illuminated plaque (Chapters XXV and XXVI), the pole was picked up, the overhead lights struck with it as on the sixteenth, and each of the four men present was touched. On the twenty-seventh it was brought down from its seat in the cabinet and used to touch Yerxa on the shoulders, Cross in the stomach, Adler on the head, etc. The illuminated ash tray was on the table, and the pole was used to tilt it over on edge and to rock it repeatedly up and down. Later the pole was held horizontal and used as a visible means of pushing the cabinet back nearly to the wall, the wings folding in and leaving Margery almost entirely outside the enclosure. The pole was left upright against the left wing.

There was another unusual performance on March 29. The pole was brought down between the psychic and the table, then shoved under F. H.'s chair. Walter instructed that all hands be piled together on the table, and McDougall, under this arrangement, claimed positive and continuous identification of both Margery's and both F. H.'s hands. The pole was then slid on the floor under the psychic's chair and under the west wing of the cabinet. It pushed the cabinet out of its path by swinging it bodily about; it then went on between the cabinet and McDougall, until the leading end was near the bookcase and the trailing end opposite the middle of McDougall's chair. No statement appears in the record about foot control, and it seems clear that Margery's feet, if free, could have done all this. But Roback, a very keen observer, was at large in the room; and at the end he displayed the greatest concern to know whether McDougall was certain that he had had both of Margery's hands, and that he had not pushed the pole himself. Unless we take these queries as verifying F. H.'s recollec-

tion that there was foot control, they would be altogether pointless and far-fetched.

Free manipulation of the pole under announced control of Margery's hands by F. H. and Richardson was got on April 1. It came down on the table with a clatter. It moved gently over the heads, balanced up and down, touched all heads in turn, poked and tapped Cross in particular, rapped the overhead light three times, tipped a small illuminated dish up on edge. Finally by "well-directed swipes" it cleared the table of all small objects; since these were illuminated, there is indicated only good control of the pole, and not ability to locate objects. Finally the pole came to rest, leaning from the table top to the top of the cabinet. Later Walter invited Goodall into the cabinet; and when his bulk made it difficult for him to enter, the pole was used to push the cabinet open sufficiently to admit him.

The sitting of April 3 brought forth an episode that is still recalled with snickers. A certain prominent Bostonian and his wife, who shall be charitably left nameless, had been invited to attend. Under complete control of Margery by these two the pole was brought down in the usual fashion. But the visiting lady had her own ideas regarding the appropriate behavior of a high-grade spook, and she proceeded to air them:

"Walter, or whatever you may be called, instead of these futile, useless and silly things such as bringing down curtain poles, do you in your wisdom tell us how to settle our troubles and the upheavals of the world."

Walter disclaimed responsibility for human frailties in very effective fashion. "Madam, if you would all be less selfish and less self-centered, there would be no upheavals."

After the unwelcome guests had withdrawn, and Walter had ragged F. H. for his lack of discrimination, he lifted the pole, apparently from where it had fallen, and "worked it about in the air with dexterity." Again on April 6, the record chronicles "wonderful sleight-of-hand work with the pole," but

gives no details. The eighth, too, saw "excellent work with the pole, touching the sitters lightly on the heads or digging them gently in the ribs." And on the ninth, Walter reverted to the technique of March 22, and after bringing the pole through the string on the illuminated plaque he waved them together through the air, some three to five feet above the table.

Further progress toward nailing the pole manipulation down as definitely genuine was made in my presence and under my control on April 11 and 12. On the former date the pole was balanced on the larger end of the megaphone as this instrument stood inverted on the table; during the performance I held both Margery's hands. The pole was also balanced in air above the small end of the megaphone. The first demonstration appeared to give much trouble, the second none at all. I was touched several times with the pole under full control on either side of Margery by F. H. and myself. Then the pole was spun as a drum-major spins his baton, only much more slowly.

April 12 brought the climax of control over the pole work. With McDougall and me in full command of all Margery's hands and feet and most of F. H.'s (see page 252), the pole came down after several violent shocks to the cabinet. It did not fall freely, but took a very puzzling course through what must have been a perfect maze of arms and legs on McDougall's side, coming at length to a horizontal position on the floor without striking any of the sitters. The first suggestion covering this was put, by McDougall, in terms of the penetration of matter—he used the expression as a description of the apparent effect rather than as a theory covering *modus operandi*. The pole seemed to fall vertically, then to turn a very sharp corner into horizontal position. If we think of it as guided by hands or arms, of normal or supernormal character, we must assume either that there were several of these, from one to another of which it was passed very dexterously,

or that there was one of them, which indeed was capable of penetrating matter. In no other way could one visualize the travel of the pole through the tangle of human extremities which it traversed.

The pole was recovered by McDougall and placed on the table, pointing toward Margery. As it lay there it joggled back and forth, and rotated through an angle of perhaps forty degrees, in the plane of the table. Part of this time it seemed so close to Margery's chest that she might have pushed it forth; but that would leave her with no means of getting it back unless she had a confederate on the far side of the circle. During all this the pole ends were frequently eclipsed to one or more sitters; and this occurred as often on Margery's end, where there was certainly no hand free to grasp the pole, as at the other end. McDougall's suggestion that rolling of the pole might account for this was tried out and found inadequate. My memorandum on this period of the sitting was: "Complete control of Margery's hands and feet, plus F. H.'s right hand, through all this."

The cabinet had already had several severe shocks without material displacement. My wing was now snatched away, opened out and back, until I could no longer reach it. The table was overturned several times and moved away from the medium, being left at the far side of the circle, standing on its side with its legs projecting out from the center. In this position it acted as a barrier against any action in the cleared zone by Cross; and to some degree as such a barrier in the cases of Adler and Ekland.

In this cleared zone, vacated by cabinet and table and of considerable extent, the pole now went into action. It lay initially on the floor. One end was elevated to McDougall's knee, numerous attempts being made before success was attained. The pole showed a tendency to fall back to the floor after getting half-way up. My control had been extended to include both of F. H.'s feet; I sat on the floor, my right hand

grasping the hand link between the psychic and her husband, my left reaching through under his chair and holding his two ankles. McDougall, now as previously, had both Margery's feet in viselike grip; and the table, with F. H.'s feet and knees, insulated the theater of action against invasion by Adler's or Ekland's feet, if not against that by their hands.

Finally, the end of the pole got up on McDougall's knee and he was instructed to "Hang on." He did not see how he was to do so without releasing the psychic. Several attempts to levitate the far end of the pole about his end as a center of revolution therefore failed, his end slipping back along his knee and the free end crashing to the floor. F. H. counted nine of these failures. At length McDougall pinched his end between his knees, and with it thus pivoted, the other end rose freely in air, came almost to vertical position, caressed me under the chin, tapped the nest of hands where I had control, rested on the edge of F. H.'s chair, etc. We must add to my summary of the control at this moment the fact that Roback, at large in the room, failed to detect the slightest indication of fraud.

During the sitting of April 15, John was credited with manipulation of the pole. It was brought out straight over the table and lowered gently to within eighteen inches; then dropped the rest of the way with a bang. It was balanced on top of the megaphone, where the latter stood on the table. In this position it was rocked like a see-saw. There was a good deal of contact between pole and sitters, as well.

Following this evening, concentration on the scales (Chapter XXXV) resulted in a vacation for the pole, which does not again figure until May 8. I quote the joint memorandum by Carrington and myself, drawn up that night before retiring:

"The pole was several times removed from place by spreading the cabinet. It was shuffled freely about the floor, in a fashion that would have been evidential only under severe control of all feet. Ultimately one end was raised to Goodall's knee and he was asked to pivot it. The other end then moved

some, but failed to approach the brilliant showing obtained with McDougall on April 12, according to Bird. The best thing done with the pole was placing it in vertical and diagonal positions above the table, with the upper end sometimes resting against the front of the cabinet and sometimes free. This was done under the so-called 'double control' [pages 196, 231] of Margery's and F. H.'s hands by the sitters adjoining them." Of course foot control was not pertinent in connection with this last episode.

The pole was again used in a committee sitting of May 11. We sat for about an hour without it, before it was activated and put in place. Within three minutes it fell as usual, and wound up on the floor. Foot control was effective throughout the circle, so far as could be established and verified in the dark. Foot control of Margery was certain and continuous, yet the pole continued to move freely about the floor. Comstock got down on the floor to observe it better. It was moving directly along its own axis, reminiscent of March 29, and there appeared to be a dark object moving with it at one end—whether the leading or the trailing end he failed to specify. At the same time it was rotating slightly about a vertical axis, and to some degree edging off sideways. Carrington here had both Margery's hands, these having been given him across F. H.'s knees; and both F. H.'s feet. McDougall had both Margery's feet. The force seemed feebler with Comstock on the floor, and Walter protested about the way he was messing things up—"things" being understood to refer to Walter's psychic structures. Comstock accordingly moved to a chair near the Victrola. Various noises were met by statements from sitters: "I did that." The pole advanced directly toward Comstock, and Walter chortled: "I did that." Comstock now reported that the pole always appeared to be gripped in the middle when it moved. F. H. was called to the telephone, and Comstock momentarily took his place in the circle; the pole continued to roll and bump against the table, with control

reported perfect in every respect, and simplified by the absence of F. H.

With Prince and myself in control of Margery's hands from either side on May 13, the pole was brought down early. During free manipulation of the ukulele, it lay in various positions across Margery's lap, my hands, the table, etc., moving a bit from time to time, presumably in response to movements by Margery and me. Ultimately one end pivoted upon some portion of Prince's anatomy—apparently his abdomen—while the other end waved freely about, high in the air, the pole at times assuming almost a vertical position. Further comment upon this incident and its sequel will have to be deferred to Chapter L.

On May 15, with Prince and Comstock at Margery's either side, the pole came down and lay on the floor at Margery's right. Later Walter asked to have it laid on the table; then he shifted it himself to the leaning position, running from table top diagonally across to the top of the cabinet. Again, on the sixteenth, with Comstock and me in control of Margery, the pole came down. It was lifted, either from the floor or from a leaning position against the table, into horizontal position pointing from Comstock to me, across Margery's lap. This simple item is noteworthy because of the absolute certainty that Margery had no free hand, the remoteness of the episode from any possible confederate, and the large extent to which Comstock's and my arms, head and shoulders actually occupied the theater of any fraud which might be alleged.

As the pole was being brought down on this evening, Comstock had accidentally thrust his head into its path and got a very painful jolt. His end of the pole was now lifted, laid gently on his head, and gently rubbed back and forth over the identical spot that had been damaged. I am sorry not to be able to record an instant and magical cure, but Walter apparently isn't that kind of a ghost!

Ever since the arrangement of the curtains had been

altered, early in January, so that they were entirely across the top of the cabinet, not hanging down in front of it at all, the curtain pole had been unnecessary, as a curtain pole, but had been merely retained as one of the seance accessories. With the introduction, about here, of a large and expensive chemical balance (Chapter XLII), it became the custom to leave the pole out of the cabinet entirely, lest these scales be damaged when it fell. With the passing out of the scales this custom was not reversed, so the history of the pole stops here.

CHAPTER XXXII

MINOR ADVENTURES OF THE CABINET

UNLIKE the pole, the cabinet itself did not constitute an active tool for Walter's use in the period of the mediumship in which we now find ourselves; but he did not ignore its possibilities altogether. He created quite a commotion with it on March 9, this being the first time he had turned his attention in that direction since the European trip. The erratic reporting of the ABC group, however, is here well exemplified. All we are told about what must have been a very important manifestation is: "The cabinet was moved about, all around the side of the room, carrying Margery in her chair with it." And not a word about control!

Several times during these months, the cabinet was more or less knocked out of shape by thrusts from the curtain pole; these incidents are recounted in the preceding chapter and need not be gone over again here. On March 14, with the sitting apparently over, Roback sat in the cabinet for experiment with the possibilities of fraud. Walter came back and did numerous things, finally forcing the front of the cabinet together until the back pivoted about the central hinge, enclosing Roback completely with his chair.

At about the same time there were several occasions on which the curtains behaved in a curious fashion, which might with some justification have been mentioned in the chapter on cold breezes. On March 10, for instance, without any warning and without any mention of breezes, one curtain from the top of the cabinet was thrown out over Mrs. Litzelmann, then pulled across the table on to her husband. Shortly after, during manipulation of the pole, the cabinet was heard to be violently wracked.

Actual coincidence with cold winds was noted in the curtain manifestations of March 15. The breeze was, in fact, heard or felt first, then the curtains rustled and moved. One of them seemed to be blown out over the heads of the sitters. It was heard rustling in this position; it touched some of those present; it finally was dragged over one or two heads and deposited on F. H.'s knee, between him and Margery. The other curtain fell, similarly, after apparently being lifted over Margery's head; it came to rest finally on her shoulders. Later on in this sitting the cabinet itself was vigorously jerked and moved about.

With reference to the mention of two curtains, I ought to explain that each of them is approximately half as wide as the cabinet is deep. The one therefore covers the top of the cabinet, in front; the other, the rear half. They hang down to a certain degree outside the cabinet and presumably Margery or either of her immediate neighbors could reach the front one without much fuss and drag it down, if any of these three had a free hand; but the rear one would present a little more of a problem.

Once more, on March 17, the curtains were removed from their place over the top of the cabinet, draped over the head of each sitter in turn, and this time left in a heap on the floor in front of Cross. I think anybody who has ever tried to handle a recalcitrant blanket in the middle of a dark and chilly night will have a feeling of sympathy for the person who might attempt this particular performance fraudulently, surrounded by those from whom it was necessary to conceal what he was doing!

After several days of inaction in this direction, one of the curtains was brought down upon F. H. and the two Yexas on March 27.

The sitting of April 12, which gave such a good demonstration with the curtain pole, also saw motion by the cabinet which was inescapably genuine. There was complete con-

trol of Margery's hands and feet by McDougall and me; and the wing of the cabinet on my side was hopelessly out of reach of any person in the room except Margery and me. But it was snatched away and opened out backwards until it was completely out of touch of my utmost efforts to find it. This motion was made possible, not by any corresponding displacement of the wing on McDougall's side, but by opening out the cabinet at the rear corners, which at this date had hinges but no angle-irons, so that either of these corners could take any angle up to a full 180 degrees. On the present occasion, as made plain in the preceding chapter, the displacement of the cabinet was a means to an end—a large open space was wanted for my accommodation and for the performance with the pole. The only escape from validity which could be pleaded here would be through the theory that the cabinet had been moved by a confederate from without; but Roback's presence at large in the room was competent to exclude this.

After this date the cabinet stayed on its good behavior until the sitting of May 9, at which it was pushed back, then pulled forward again. It then relapsed into inaction for a few days; and when next it broke out, it broke out all over. Indeed, the episode of May 14 is of such importance that I leave it for the present, to come back to it when I reach it chronologically.

CHAPTER XXXIII

TYPICAL SEANCE RECORDS OF EARLY 1924

As I did in bringing to a close the first period of the mediumship, I proceed now to present the complete records of several sittings. These will, of course, have been largely anticipated in detail in the preceding pages; but no idea will there have been got of the general sequence or tempo of the seance considered as a whole, the variety of phenomena likely to be encountered on a single night, etc. To make good this deficiency I give one record of a very early date in this period of the mediumship, and several showing to what the mediumship had come when it was diverted into different directions by the *Scientific American* committee.

"Sitting of January 1, 1924, at 10 Lime Street, Boston. 10.30-12.00 p.m.

"Present: Margery, F. H., Dr. and Mrs. Richardson, Cross, Adler, Mrs. Cadwalader, all in circle. Also Mrs. S., who sat outside, very near cabinet and directly behind Richardson, who held Margery's left hand and controlled her left foot.

"Room cold. Total darkness. Cabinet curtains had been removed and draped over top, instead of hanging down in front.

"Music was played on Victrola nearly constantly, F. H. leaving circle to start it afresh when it stopped. This seemed to be Walter's wish. Table moved, table tilted 'good evening' and levitated under full control.

"Circle was formed. Much cold air was felt, blowing out of the cabinet.

"Touches were felt by three sitters, F. H., Dr. and Mrs. Richardson; and by Mrs. S. and the medium herself. These usually were preceded by cold-air blowing and were

gentle but quite distinct. Medium under full control. F. H. felt the largest number of touches and described them as 'holding his ankles,' 'tugging at his trousers,' and as remaining several seconds. His hair was also stroked. In my case [Mrs. Richardson], the effect was as though some soft object like a rubber ball or an animal's paw had been gently stroked and pressed against the ankle and calf. It was clearly done in a caressing manner, a human manner, but did not feel like a human hand. I also felt, several times, as though a cobweb were over my face.

"Walter spoke only at rare intervals. Once it was to direct us to put the dinner gong on the table. This was done, with the gong hammer laid across it, and we expected to hear notes struck as was done one night. The table moved about and pressed against some of the circle, without contact [*i.e.*, with no hands on the table-top]. The touches continued. Then Walter's voice said something about the hammer and Mark, and his father, but it was not well understood, partly because the Victrola was going. Suddenly there was a slight noise on the table and the hammer was heard to fall on the floor between the psychic and Dr. Richardson. F. H. then understood that Walter had said, 'Mark will touch his father with the hammer.' It must have passed very close to Dr. Richardson, but he did not feel it. Walter also told us that it was John and Mark who had been making the touches.

"Walter said 'Good night' in the midst of the music and the sitting was closed. Mrs. Cadwalader said that she had not seen a table act precisely like this one."

"Sitting at 10 Lime Street, Boston, March 9, 1924.
9.30-11.00 p.m.

"Present: Dr. and Mrs. Brown, Adler, Cross, Mrs. S., Margery, F. H., Caldwell, Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, and Carrel. Usual conditions.

"Walter came through promptly and seemed glad to see

the Stewarts. He talked for twenty minutes in his usual bright manner and then began the physical phenomena. A new birdlike creature of light which he called Jennie cavorted around and touched everybody in the circle and the four who sat outside the circle.

"Mrs. Stewart, sitting behind Brown and Cross and at least three feet beyond the psychic's reach, had a handkerchief taken out of her hand and a shawl pulled from her shoulders. Then there was a brilliant display of light, with Walter doing his 'scientific research' whereby he shows a light and asks how many see it, proving that he can make a light visible to as many of the group as he chooses or to all. Then with considerable commotion, he having told us that all his 'gang' was present, he dislodged the curtain pole from top of cabinet, threw it and the back curtains on the table. It made a slight wound on Adler's forehead, but Walter explained that as it came down somebody hit it with an elbow.

"Mrs. Stewart held a heavy antique gold bracelet out between the heads of Brown and F. H. and it was promptly taken by Walter; it was then placed on the table; it was handed to Mrs. Brown; it was taken from her and put on F. H.'s head and it was then put on Caldwell's head at the opposite side of the circle; then it disappeared. Finally Walter said, 'Turn on the lights and take a rest.' When this was done, the bracelet was found to be threaded on and in the middle of the pole which lay on the table.

"On resuming, wooden ash trays on everybody's head were knocked off, and the pole, which had been replaced in the cabinet, was dislodged again, this time to the floor in front of the psychic. Here a great commotion followed, the cabinet being moved all about the side of the room and the psychic in her chair also being moved. Then the curtain pole was heard hitting the cabinet up high, and later it went crashing down behind the psychic, having been lifted completely over her head without touching her. Walter kept saying all through

the show: 'Are you having a good time? Isn't this a great party we're having?'

"At one time during the sitting the Victrola slowed and F. H. said, 'Walter, shall I get up and attend to it?' He replied, 'No, I will attend to it.' And sure enough it started up right away. At another time Stewart could not hear very well, so he said to Walter, 'Shut off that thing, will you?' Whereupon it promptly stopped. F. H. said to Walter, 'Shall I shut off the electricity so the motor won't burn?' 'I will attend to that,' said Walter." [This paragraph looks forward to Chapter XL.]

"Sitting at 10 Lime Street, Boston, March 13, 1924.
9.45-11.00 p. m.

"Present and in circle: Margery, F. H., Cross, Dr. and Mrs. Richardson. Mrs. S. sat near.

"Very stormy night; room quite cool. Total darkness and constant Victrola.

"Walter laughed almost as soon as we joined hands, and greeted us.

"F. H.: 'You see what faithful friends you have, Walter, coming out in this storm.'

"W.: 'There's a wild night ahead,' which might have referred either to the weather or the sitting. He proceeded to give us an evening of phenomena of remarkable character, almost constant till the close. These included lights, touches by various substances, movement of objects and telling the contents of F. H.'s pocketbook.

"The light began very soon and lasted all the evening, with very short disappearances. It moved about a great deal, being first seen near Margery's head, later advancing toward the middle of the table, where it stayed a long time. During the movement of objects, noises, or touches, it could be seen in the vicinity of these occurrences. For instance, loud raps on the cabinet were accompanied by simultaneous flashes of the light, at the spot where the raps seemed to occur."

[Here comes the pocketbook incident of page 216, which I need not repeat.]

"F. H. had placed two carnations on the table, at the beginning of the sitting; also two wooden curtain rings, of about three inches in diameter, and asked to have them interlocked [something apparently not in Walter's repertoire]. When Walter began to move the flowers about, Mrs. Richardson said, 'I should like to smell one.' A carnation was carried with almost lightning speed around the circle, brushing our faces and tapping our heads and noses. At last it landed right under Mrs. Richardson's chin and remained there.

"Mrs. R.: 'I'll put it back on the table.'

"W.: 'No, I'll take another,' which he did, and continued to touch us with it.

"Touches as of leathery fingers were felt by F. H. and Richardson. As usual the former received the most attention and this at times was rather violent. F. H. cried out, as he was struck or pushed, but these exclamations were always followed by 'Thank you, Walter.' In the midst of these phenomena, Walter said: 'We are playing a little trick on you. When the sitting is over, see if you can find the rings.'

"Margery said several times, 'There is something under my chair like a cat,' and we could hear a gentle commotion in the cabinet now and then—rustlings, tappings, etc. Once or twice sitters had touches on their feet. All the time the light continued, at times as large as a dinner plate, again much smaller; sometimes with one edge clear-cut and the rest nebulous; shaped sometimes almost like the upper half of a face or a half-mask, in general outline. Brighter at some times than at others, the light was seen almost constantly by F. H. and by Mrs. Richardson, who sat next him; seldom by Cross and Dr. Richardson, who completed the circle, in that order. On Dr. Richardson's blaming his eyesight for this, Walter quoted Mark as saying, 'Yes, Father ought to get some new glasses,' which is probably a fact.

"Speaking still of Mark, Walter said: 'Mark is a brave boy. He is so patient and faithful. When the yarn gets all broken up and I have given you up and John says he will never do anything for you again, Mark goes right on, picking it up and mending it.' (Highly characteristic.)

"The voice was distinct enough to be heard by all the sitters a good part of the time, and once almost broke into clear speech.

"Dr. Richardson held Margery's left hand all through the sitting and reported it to have remained limp and passive. Her other hand was likewise controlled by F. H.

"At 11.00, Walter said 'I must go now,' with great abruptness, as though he were obeying a peremptory call."

[The record next recounts the verification of Walter's count of F. H.'s money, concluding this with the words: "It is not customary for F. H. to carry so much money, and nobody knew of it save himself and Walter, whose information was even more detailed than F. H.'s himself." It then concludes:]

"We proceeded to search for the rings, which had disappeared from the table. It took us five or ten minutes to discover them in a sort of fold of the curtains, which were hung over the top of the cabinet. They were so placed that we did not see them until we had searched the cabinet thoroughly, as we thought, more than once."

My own notes made immediately after the sitting of April 12 are much fuller than F. H.'s, and I give them, so far as they have not already been given:

"The circle: F. H., Adler, Mrs. McDougall, Cross, Ekland, Dr. McDougall, Margery; in that order from left to right. Bird outside the circle, between Margery and F. H.; Roback circulating in room.

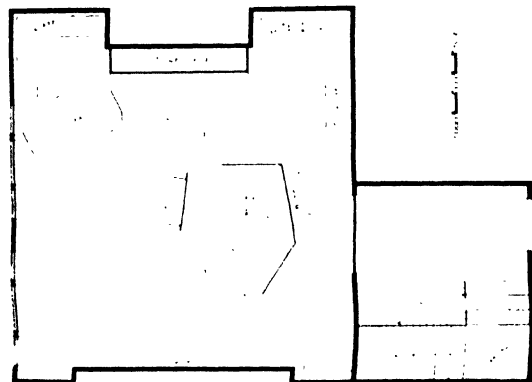
"*Control*: McDougall had psychic's right hand without interruption; her two stockinged feet rested on his without

interruption. F. H.'s continual control of the psychic checked up by Bird, as follows:

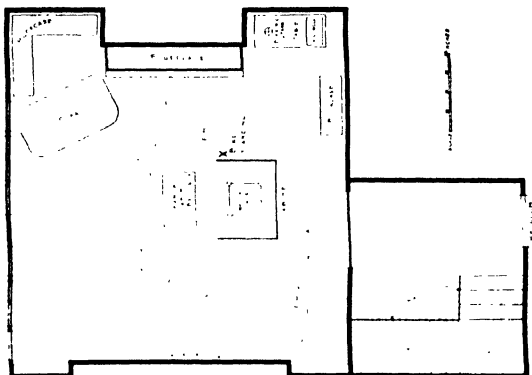
"At first Bird sat on stool behind F. H.'s chair, with right hand on F. H.'s right elbow. Throughout this period, this elbow was immobile; but this was inadequate. Therefore, during a second period, Bird, standing and retaining control for the most part of F. H.'s wrist, now and then abandoned this to explore, in verification that F. H. actually held the medium's hand. He always found this link intact, but this intermittent check, too, was inadequate. So for a third period, including by far the larger portion of the sitting, Bird kept right hand in constant contact with their two hands where joined. Standing so, he frequently explored with left hand up the arm to verify that it was the psychic's; and he kept check over the fact that it was a left hand from her and a right from F. H. that were linked under his control. When pole manipulation began at a level sufficiently low to introduce possibility of the use of legs, Bird extended left arm, till then free, across F. H.'s lap to control his knees. Walter objected to this, so Bird sat on floor and controlled F. H.'s ankles by reaching through under chair with left hand. Control of link between Margery and F. H. maintained here with right hand."

[I insert here a paragraph from F. H.'s record, which is in accord with the facts and which bears upon what I have just said: "During the whole of the sitting, if Bird, in controlling the clasped hands or elsewhere allowed his hand to enter the circle, he was told by Walter to correct this. He might clasp the hands, etc., on the external aspect as much as he pleased, but must not get around inside." I do not know whether this makes sense or not, but at least Walter was consistent in this attitude, for this seance. Of course, since that time I have been all over the space adjoining Margery, in my control, without protest from Walter.]

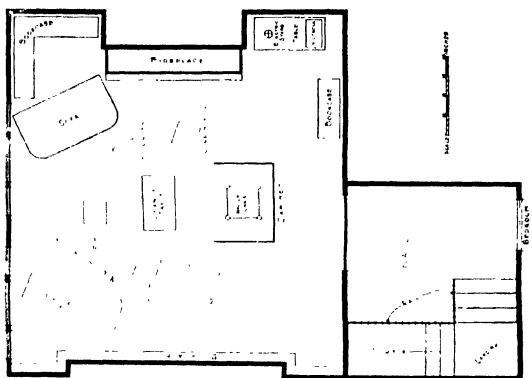
"Psychic Lights: [I have given, on page 202, all but the



April 12, 1924



April 26, 1924



May 11, 1924

ARRANGEMENTS AND ACTION OF THREE INTERESTING SEANCES

last sentence here, and so proceed to it] Walter asked if we had had enough lights; we said we had, and he indicated that he would give no more, but would concentrate on something else.

"Early manipulation of curtain pole: [This, too, I have given in full, on page 237; and I need only state that the memorandum which I am quoting winds up here with] Complete control of psychic's hands and feet plus F. H.'s right hand, during all this. [This brings the pole down to the moment when it was on the table and rotating in the plane of the table top.]

"Movement of table and clearing of theater for pole: Cabinet had already had several shocks without serious displacement. Now the wing on Bird's side was snatched away, opened out backwards, until Bird could no longer reach it from his post behind the chairs. Other side of cabinet not disturbed. Table overturned, straight away from medium, three times, leaving it standing on end with legs pointing out of circle. Certainly acted as barrier against action in central zone by Cross. Uncertain to what extent Ekland and Adler's hands would be shut off; their feet certainly excluded.

"Late Manipulation of Curtain Pole in Cleared Zone. [Covered in full on pages 238-239.]

"Voices and Correlated Sounds: The 'independent' whisper heard when necessary for Walter to make a statement, but he was very reserved. Bird got impression at times that whisper came from too high for the psychic, but all reservations appropriate here. [Roback questions this in the margin of the original: the only exception he took on reading the document.] The megaphone voice was hardly heard; was it heard at all? Whistles came with considerable freedom in and around cabinet; Bird somewhat more confident that some of these were outside medium's range. [McDougall questioned this as well as the other one, but nothing else.] After Walter said 'Good night' and while Bird was searching for

the light switch, there was heard a whistle, very clear and shrill. Bird had not got far enough away to be seriously deceived as to direction of cabinet; and this whistle came distinctly from another quarter. Of all sitters, could only have been Adler. Distance indeterminable. [The "combined laugh" of page 294 next gets attention; I have said everything there that the original says.]

"Physical Contacts, Real or Apparent, and Allied Phenomena: Bird was caressed in face by megaphone; control of medium's hands complete at the time. Shall we place any significance at all upon the medium's insistence that somebody was in the cabinet with her? McDougall reported tapping as of fingers on his head, stroking as of soft fingers on his knee. These were not included in Roback's generalization that whenever anybody announced a contact from without the circle, it had been he. [The psychic contact encountered by my foot comes next; it is given fully, quoted from the original, on page 180.]

"While cabinet was outspread toward the end, Bird explored space between him and it in endeavor to learn how far it had been displaced. Walter spoke up and asked Bird not to touch things. Bird did make light contact with cabinet, leaning over and with arm extended its limit; is not certain whether Walter's voice preceded or followed this. It was a close race in either event; the two were in part simultaneous and it would merely be a question which started first. The contact was so light and the cabinet so remote from Margery as to suggest that knowledge of it was supernormal."

And now, at the risk of wearying the reader, I shall give, for purposes of comparison, F. H.'s own record of the same thing. I think this will show that, where he puts his mind on the recording of the physical action of the seance to the exclusion of the words of the spirits, he can do it about as accurately as the next fellow.

"Sitting at 10 Lime Street, April 12, 1924. 9.30-12.30 p.m.

"Present: Messrs. Adler, Bird, Cross and Ekland, Dr. Roback, Dr. and Mrs. McDougall, Margery and F. H. The order of the circle was: The psychic; to her right McDougall; at her left F. H.; Bird sitting between cabinet and F. H. with his right hand controlling the clasped hands of Margery and F. H., and his left hand controlling the legs of F. H. Margery's stockinged feet were both on McDougall's feet.

"Walter came through with very satisfactory lights near the psychic, over the table, different shapes and forms, visible to some, then to all and in many shapes. He talked distinctly with and without megaphone, but talking was a relatively unimportant feature of the sitting. He brought down the pole, having it fall between the table and Dr. McDougall. Just how it reached the floor without hitting the clasped hands of the psychic and Dr. McDougall has not been worked out.

"After a time Walter tipped the table along its long diameter three-quarters of a complete revolution away from the psychic, so that the final position was standing on its end with the top facing her and the legs facing Mrs. McDougall. By this maneuver all in circle except the psychic, McDougall, F. H. and Bird were walled off, as it were, by the table and its legs, leaving an arena for work in front of these four.

"The pole was then shifted to a position across from Dr. McDougall's feet to a point between him and Bird; one end was then lifted no less than nine times into McDougall's lap. The last three times Walter instructed McDougall to hold his end, and then Walter lifted the other end, under the close observation of Bird, up between Bird and F. H., with both F. H. and Margery thoroughly controlled, until the pole was vertical in McDougall's lap or lying across from McDougall's to F. H.'s lap. This whole manifestation was without any doubt superphysical. F. H. and McDougall both had the experience of contact on their knees and laps of a solid soft substance like a forearm or a leg; and once

when Bird sought to ease his position as he sat on the floor he stretched out his right leg under the psychic's chair and came in contact with some soft yielding substance which must have been superphysical because of the control." This record closes with the paragraph which I have already quoted, in connection with my own.

As usual, F. H. is found innocently misrepresenting the continuity of the control (see page 158). I did not have his feet until late in the seance, yet his record implies that I had them throughout; I did not have adequate control of Margery's left hand until I had indulged in some fifteen minutes of experimental work to find out how far I needed to go and how far I should be permitted by Walter to go in this direction, yet he charges me with this control from the beginning. This is the only serious criticism which I should advance of his reporting, after having read his records of over fifty seances at which I have been present. And I think the document above will bear me out in this attitude; any other discrepancy between his and my records is either a minor one, or one where I am as likely wrong as he is. Of course, objection may be advanced to his including conclusions as to the superphysical character of the phenomena in his seance record; but this is a harmless error, in that it is so wholly evident on the face.

PART IV

WITH THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN COMMITTEE

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE EPISODE OF THE SEALED JAR

WE have now brought down to the end of April, or to an even later date, our description of all the spontaneous phenomena of the Margery mediumship, save a few which I have deliberately reserved because it will be more convenient to go back later and pick them up than it would have been to cover them prematurely. We are therefore arrived at the point where the mediumship passes under the observation of the *Scientific American* committee. We shall find that this committee's contact with the case influenced the phenomena profoundly; and for some time to come we shall center our attention almost wholly upon committee doings and committee sittings.

One major question of policy faced the Committee from the start—a question which always exists as to the most profitable seance-room procedure. Shall one rely for validation of the phenomena upon the traditional control of the medium, plus systematic exclusion of the opportunities for confederacy? Or shall one seek, with the aid of modern scientific apparatus, to put the investigation on a basis of machine-made precision which shall eliminate the necessity for personal control of the psychic, eliminate the bugaboo of the accomplice, and afford us an automatic guarantee that anything that happens in the seance-room is necessarily genuine? So able an investigator as Geley has expressed a strong preference for the former alternative, indicating that his confidence in the results of the seance varies in direct ratio with his own personal knowledge of the whereabouts of the medium's extremities, and that there is no substitute for the good old-

fashioned way of preventing fraud by holding the medium's hands and feet. But when we bring the student of modern physics into the case, we are apt to find him leaning in the other direction; and such was the case with Comstock.

There is much to say for his ideas. When one sits in a dark room and gets touched with the curtain pole, there are too many factors involved. The dark, the room, the curtain pole, the psychic, the other sitters—all enter the problem. But if we can only bring sufficient ingenuity into the case, argues Comstock, we ought to succeed in devising a way for the psychic forces to work which shall automatically do away with the need for worrying about the room, the degree of illumination, the hypothesis of confederacy, and the precise location from moment to moment of the medium's extremities, leaving us free to concentrate upon the apparatus itself and the phenomena obtained with it. The ideal psychic manifestation will be one involving the use of such apparatus that it cannot occur at all save genuinely. And the apparatus, of course, should belong not to the medium, but to the investigator.

Comstock thought the chances excellent that if he were allowed comparatively free swing, he might be able to devise such apparatus, introduce it to Walter, and get phenomena through its use. It was decided to let him attack the matter along these lines, with McDougall for the moment taking the part of an interested spectator. So Comstock went into his laboratory to invent a new and better type of psychic manifestation.

It was of course not expected that the mediumship would be turned wholly into the new channels opened up by this scheme. It was understood that whatever we did, the general body of the spontaneous phenomena would go right on. In fact, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, they did go right on, and the Committee did not ignore them by any means. But we come now, in addition to these familiar manifestations,

to a body of phenomena directly inspired by my Committee in general, and by Comstock in particular; and these will absorb our attention for several chapters.

Comstock's first line of attack lay in the direction of trying to get Walter to do something inside a closed and sealed space. He was, I believe, not certain just what the final version of a "closed and sealed space" would be. But he brought his preliminary version with him to the sitting of April 18. The new apparatus was a two-quart olive-bottle, with the cork sealed in place by a big daub of wax. Projecting down into the bottle from the under side of the cork was a six-inch brass hook, shaped like a shepherd's crook, with the opening protected by a strip of brass, acting as a spring. This bore against the inner side of the hook, substantially as diagrammed. The whole thing worked more or less like a snap hook. By appropriate pressure the hook could be opened for the entrance of a ring, permitting this to be hung upon the hook; but once on, getting it off again would be a different proposition.

In this bottle, loose, were a wooden curtain ring about two inches in diameter, over all; a brass ring 1 1/2 inch in diameter; a flexible ring of green cord, some five inches across; a short sharp pencil; and a single sheet of paper about three inches by five. The program put before Walter involved the production of coherent writing inside the bottle or the placing of one of the rings on the hook. Opinion would differ, whether this is a psychic impossibility or not; it constitutes a legitimate test if too sweeping conclusions are not to be drawn in the event of failure.

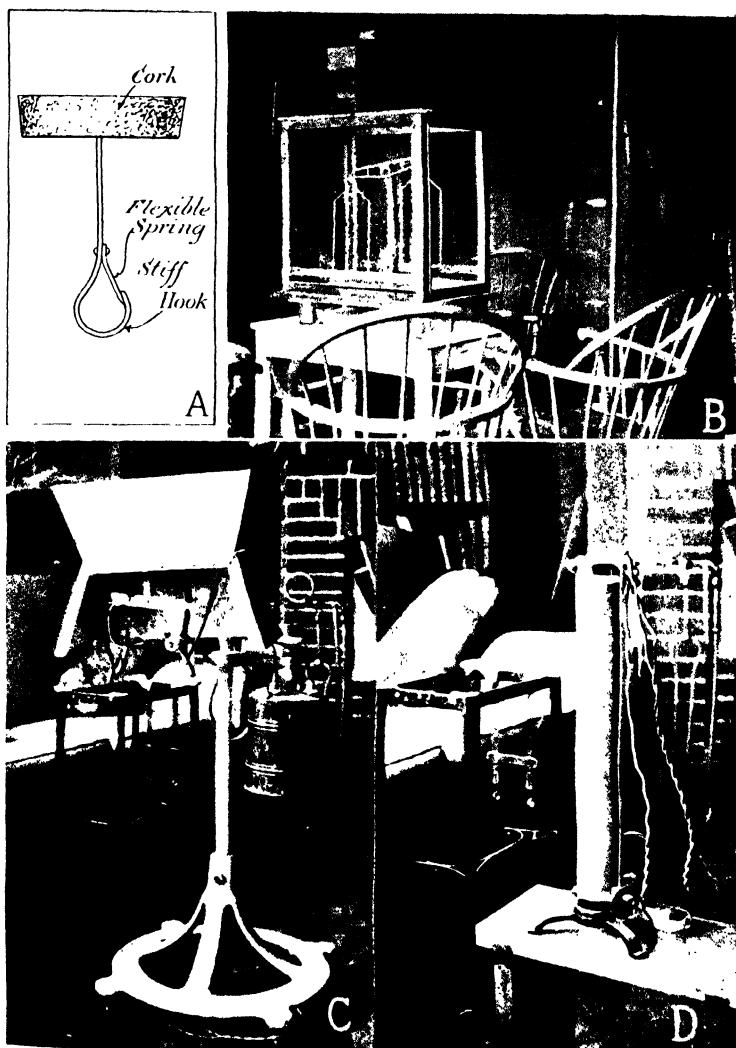
No specific statement was ever made by Comstock, covering the impossibility of shaking the bottle in such a fashion as to make one of the rings fall against the hook with sufficient force to open it. But clearly, if this should turn out to be possible, the removal of the ring would be a different matter, which certainly could be achieved only by holding

the hook open while the ring was withdrawn. If, however, the psychic force operates in a fourth dimension, as often is alleged, either or both these tests ought to be, in theory at least, simple enough.

The apparatus was introduced to Walter on April 18; and if Comstock ran true to form, he must have made a long speech, explaining to Walter that he didn't want to ask the impossible; that he hoped Walter would work over the bottle for a while and see whether he thought anything could be done with it; that if he didn't, the inventive faculty would have to get busy in a different direction. Comstock, of all the investigators who have sat on the case, barring, I hope, myself, is the most consistent in his attitude of always playing the game with the Walter personality.

Walter expressed instant interest, and willingness to try. The sitting was held in the dark; the bottle stood on the table. As the evening progressed, Walter toyed with it as he would with any other object placed at his disposal. He tipped it on its side; then rolled it violently back and forth on the table and the floor, with the remark: "I'm rolling doughnuts." Next the contents of the bottle were heard jumping about inside, presumably through vertical displacement of the entire jar. The bottle was thrust into the faces of F. H. and Comstock, upon Comstock's knees and into Margery's lap. It was shaken in the air in various places, and finally deposited on the floor behind Margery. Then the curtain pole was used like a shinny stick, to shove the jar about. At the end Walter said: "Be sure to look in the bottle when you are through, but don't handle it more than you have to, and don't take it from this room."

Examination revealed the sheet of paper held, its long diameter vertical, deeply impaled on the hook and held by the spring. Too much credit must not be attached to Walter's apparent state of knowledge; I am sure he would have told them to look in the jar, as a matter of principle. But the



SOME LIME STREET SEANCE-ROOM EQUIPMENT

A: the hook of page 261. B: general view of cabinet, with scales on table. C: quartz mercury-vapor lamp (page 359). D: rheostat used to regulate routine red light of seance room.

paper has no weight and no rigidity to aid in getting the hook open, if it should fall in position to enter. On the other hand, the paper is so thin that one might ask whether the hook need be opened at all to get it on. But we at least rule out fraud. If not genuinely psychic, the result noted can only be an accident, for the bottle could not be opened and resealed in the seance room.

Walter objected to the size of the wooden ring. It was too fat to go on the hook. "Make a doughnut with a bigger hole," he said, pursuing a previous figure of speech. I judge he was correct here, that the hook would hardly open wide enough to admit this ring.

The sitting closed at 11 p.m. At some time during the next day, Saturday the nineteenth, F. H. had to go a hundred miles or so by train on a professional call. At the last minute he found that he could not get back by train for his Sunday routine; so Margery followed in the car to bring him back. She took Cross along; and at 8 p.m., sitting in the car, Aleck's curiosity whether Walter would come under such conditions led him to propound the query. He was answered by Walter's whistle, first apparently outside; then in the car and often repeated. They asked him why he didn't go back to Lime Street and hook one of the rings. "I will," his interpretative whistle indicated.

Returning in the car, the party of three reached Lime Street at about 1.30 Sunday morning and went to the top floor for twenty minutes with Walter. "You are tired," he said, "but I want you to look at the bottle after I go."

The green cord ring was found on the hook, the paper being apparently undisturbed in the jaw. It is self-evident that the jar would have to be opened and resealed to produce this result normally. It is almost evident that Margery herself could not have found time to do this in the interval between Comstock's departure and the climax. The onus thus falls upon the hypothetical confederate, who has to stand for so

much. But Comstock was not born yesterday; he must have marked the wax. He admits that when next he saw the jar the ring was on the hook; he says nothing of any indications that the seal had been disturbed. But granted a confederate, he would have had ample time to make a plaster cast of the wax and use this to restore it in its original condition. Obviously we cannot regard as conclusive anything done in our absence inside a bottle sealed only with wax. Walter himself pointed this out to Comstock, and told him that the only jar that would really mean anything would be one blown all in one piece, with the hook embedded in the glass. "Like an electric bulb," was his simile.

The more abstract objection will perhaps be raised that it is a violation of psychic tradition for anything to be done in the medium's absence. Yet the haunted house suggests the possibility; and if there be genuine apports, the go-fetch-it half of this phenomenon is necessarily done without the medium. Walter insists that he putters about freely in the seance room when nobody from our plane is present; and he advances this claim persistently and consistently. He demands that things be left undisturbed in the seance room as much as possible. Often he presents this demand with reference to specific apparatus in the interval between specific seances; and he keeps it always before the house as a matter of principle. He says he has a lot of super-physical apparatus in the seance room, which gets disturbed when this room is invaded. Occasionally he even objects to the room's being swept and aired. It is undeniable that phenomena go better when his wishes in this respect are met. The very startling claim that the ring was got on the hook in Margery's absence, therefore, I am slower to condemn than general principle might suggest. Of course the notion of phenomena going on and wires being laid in the medium's absence, if accepted, points pretty definitely toward a discarnate intelligence as *the operating factor*. *The reader will have to decide for*

himself whether this is a philosophic advantage or disadvantage.

Walter had given instructions that the jar stand on the lower shelf of the table between sittings. On the twentieth, there was a seance which involved the jar only in that it was then that Comstock saw the ring on the hook. On the twenty-first, examination in good red light by F. H., Margery, Goodall, Golding and Cross led to the statement that the ring was now off the hook. This is clearly something impossible of accidental occurrence, and drives us to choose between genuineness, and removal and resealing. When one incident forces us to choose between validity and accident, and another between validity and fraud, their combined suggestion is inescapable.

During this sitting, after shaking the bottle up and putting it on the floor behind Margery, Walter was apparently rolling it about like a rolling pin. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"Gee; I've cracked it. That's too bad; Comstock will be sore. Tell him to bring a new bottle, but to use the same hook, because I've got this one fixed so I can use it well. Tell him to put in only cord rings like the one I hooked, and to put in six or eight of them. I'll put them all on; and I challenge any human being in your plane to do that."

Examination showed a stellate fracture near the neck, hardly big enough to be called a serious injury, and certainly not to be cited as a means of fraudulent entry into the bottle. The sitters insisted they heard no noise of breaking glass, and that Walter's announcement constituted one of the "facts known only to him" for which F. H. is ever on the watch. The paper in the jar was covered with dots and the pencil was broken. Those present, in my judgment, put too high a value upon the improbability that this could have occurred accidentally; it seems to me a probable normal result of shaking the jar about.

There now arises a question of fact, between Comstock and the regular sitters. Comstock had accepted, in principle, Wal-

ter's suggestion for a wholly sealed jar. But if there were no reason to suppose that Walter could work inside such a vessel, Comstock wished to avoid the trouble and expense of manufacturing it. So he regarded the glass jar with the seals as constituting a preliminary; if anything were done under the seal, he meant then to supply the new jar, similar internally to the first one, but blown all in one piece, without any mouth at all. Success with such a vessel would of course be final.

With this idea in mind, Comstock felt that the hooking of the ring was as impressive as anything that was likely to be done with the original jar, and that it constituted the necessary preliminary success. But he was experimenting for greater security against accident, by varying the shape and tension of the hook and the spring. Pending determination of the best forms for these, he took no pains to insure recollection or record of the further sequence of events with the old jar. During the day of the twenty-second he sent for the damaged bottle, to salvage the hook; and he does not remember that when he got it back the ring was off the hook. At the same time, I believe he realizes that he did not examine it with any care; and that the probabilities of error lie against him rather than against the five sitters of the twenty-first.

The fact that Comstock's memory did not agree with theirs never occurred to the five persons in question; they assumed that his observations and theirs coincided. By pure chance, through the concentration of attention upon Walter's further work with the jar idea, and the projection of the thoughts of all concerned into the future, nothing was said at the time to bring this divergence to light. When, some weeks later, Comstock began to realize, from things said about the jar in his presence, that the claim was being advanced that the ring had been taken off the hook, he promptly and frankly explained, without precipitating any argument as to mutual good faith, that this was not his knowledge or recollection of the incident. There can be no question of good faith raised

here, in fact. I knew the details of the Lime Street claims regarding the jar incident, and I was as much surprised as anybody to learn that Comstock's recollection did not agree.

If this issue did not get joined at once, another one did—this time between Comstock and Walter. For the evening of the twenty-second, Comstock brought another temporary bottle, to keep Walter's attention in this direction until the fused-in jar should be ready. This one was about fifteen inches high, of wide mouth; and under the wax the cork was securely wired in place. Inside were three cord rings of reasonable size, a small pad of paper, and a pencil; and of course the hook, which Conant describes, in a contemporary document, as "a smooth-spring brass hook." The rings, according to Comstock and Conant, were this time "absolutely unable to enter or leave the hook by falling against the spring from gravity." Comstock stated that the hook was the same old hook, but that he had smoothed it out, recurved it to what he regarded as a better shape, and used an entirely new spring to close the aperture. Walter came through promptly when the seance was started, and said:

"I asked you not to change that hook with which I was acquainted. Nevertheless you did so. Now I must get acquainted with this new bottle. There is no use going on with this unless you are willing to record what I have done. It's all rather a waste of time, when you know that whatever I do with this new jar, the world will not believe it, but will insist that the hook should be fused into a closed bottle like an electric bulb."

The psychic manipulation of the jar hung in abeyance while this controversy was fought out; for Comstock would not admit that he had made any significant change in the hook. He was not present on the twenty-third, but F. H. put before Walter, as his own, certain views which he knew Comstock wished to get on record:

"Now, Walter, it seems to me that we should finish up

this bottle stuff in the dark, and get along to red light action with the balances. [Even if the *Scientific American* award were paid on the basis of something done with the jar, Comstock intended to pursue the case.] Further, I think the bottle should be left here between sittings only with the understanding that nothing shall actually be accomplished with it visibly except when we are sitting. Of course it would be understood that you may work on it all you please betweentimes, provided you do nothing that is supposed to count as phenomena."

What Comstock feared was not the danger of being fooled himself, but that a lot of wiseacres, reading whatever he might have to report, would conjure up reasons for imagining that he had been fooled. He pictured these smart folk asking him how he knew that the bottle in which he found the finished phenomenon was his bottle rather than a substituted one; he pictured other absurd claims; and he feared that he would not be able to convince the average critic that he had met them. All of which makes just enough sense to prevent our dismissing it, offhand, as absurd.

Walter's remarks about Comstock were not so courteous. "That man lied to me. He saw the string on the hook, he saw it off the hook; he heard me tell him not to change the hook when he changed his bottle. Then he took the old bottle and hook to his laboratory and worked for an hour to get the ring on, and to get it off when it was on; but he could do neither. [This was a fact, and Margery insists she did not know it.] Then instead of leaving the hook as it was, as I asked him to, he polished the hook, changed its shape, and put in a stronger spring. Although he had found my trick impossible for him to do, he made all these changes to make it harder. He says that spring will bend with a third-ounce pressure. I should say rather a third-pound. With the new hook, I think the force I should have to use to open the hook might burst the jar."

Then Walter turned his guns upon his audience as a

whole. "I don't give a damn about convincing the public or anyone. You have no idea why I'm here. But don't tell all this to Comstock; leave him to me. I may break his bottle and his scales—that's his outlook. I don't see how you fools can expect anything. You keep jumping up to the telephone or to put on the red light. You never sit with the same crowd twice. You get all tense and nervous."

During the day of the twenty-fourth the glass jar was taken out to be photographed. Comstock brought it back that night, and Walter laid down the law to him:

"It is to be understood from now on that the things you want worked with are mine. I want them put on the table now, and left there during the sittings and between the sittings, and never touched by any of you. [He habitually makes this last statement in extreme situations like the present one, and then partly recedes from it later.] Whatever I do—and I may do nothing at all—I will do when you are here; but I must have the things to work with between the sittings. I don't know any more about this business than you do, Comstock; I'm just experimenting, the same as you are."

This is an idea to which Walter returns again and again. Scores of times I have heard him say, when asked whether he can do some particular thing: "I don't know; I'll try." On another occasion his words were: "I'm just as ignorant as you are, Comstock." Comstock enjoyed this hugely, laughing loudly and rejoicing: "That's *some* ignorant, Walter!"

Ultimately on this date, April 24, we got around to the physical stuff; but the jar was ignored. On the twenty-fifth, however, it got a good deal of Walter's attention. It was rolled about the table, and though its large diameter and smooth sides made it extremely difficult to handle with one hand, it was carried about through the air with all freedom. Comstock, F. H. and I were touched with it. Noises were frequently heard, completely identifiable as inside the jar.

His mind fixed upon the difficulty of saying positively

what could be done inside the jar by shaking it up from without, Comstock had attempted to control this rough stuff. A small tube, fastened vertically to the shank of the hook, contained mercury; the jar could not be materially shaken or tipped without spilling this. I thought this a waste of good material; I assumed that, mercury or no mercury, Walter would do what he pleased with the jar. He did; and at one point he asked Comstock where he thought his mercury was, now. At an earlier moment Walter had said that he would turn the bottle over as much as he pleased; the mercury might go where it would, and Comstock might go to the devil.

After Comstock's departure, we continued the seance. The jar stood on the table, in easy reach if Margery had had a free hand; but F. H. had one of hers and I the other. Manipulation of the jar in Comstock's presence had got the rings twisted partly together and partly about the paper pad, in a fashion which seemed improbably accidental. They were now partly disengaged. The pad was then got into semi-erect position against the side of the jar; two of the rings remained slightly tangled with it; and the third ring was built up in a very curious fashion atop this structure and against the hook. This was done, of course, in darkness, and so far as the noises made would indicate, might as likely as not have been the mere result of shaking the jar about.

F. H. insisted that this was a wonderful display of Walter's ingenuity of intended technique for hooking the ring. I felt that one must wonder why such indirection were necessary; but I could agree that if this really were part of the hooking process, it was being done in a way that would surely not have occurred to me. F. H. inferred that Walter had difficulty holding the ring while attacking the stiff hook and equal difficulty bringing the ring up from the bottom of the jar while holding the hook open; and that this curious line of attack represented his effort to evade the obstacles. Though the rearrangement which I describe was effected with much motion of the bottle

on the table and in the air, and with much noise, it did not look to me like a position of equilibrium, and I thought the probability of its chance occurrence small.

In this or an earlier sitting, Comstock and F. H. simultaneously announced being touched on their foreheads with the bottle. I do not know how we can be certain that the touches were absolutely simultaneous; I should prefer to think of very rapid transfer of the bottle, which would in fact agree perfectly with my seance observations in general. But, in any event, it was certain that there could be no confusion between the bottle and any other object; and Walter explained that he was making a bottle of his own. The suggestion was drawn from this that he makes a psychic double of all our apparatus, working directly on this; and that, automatically or otherwise, the results are duplicated on the material prototype. On one other occasion something was said that supports such a theory, but if we were to take it seriously we ought to have more than two random references to it in such a long time.

When we went to the seance room on the evening of the twenty-sixth, we found the contents of the glass jar collapsed, and lying flat in the bottom. Cross and I had been experimenting with other apparatus during the morning, and F. H. was inclined to blame us for having spoiled Walter's game; but we were positive that we had not disturbed the jar in any way. The suggestion was then advanced that, following Walter's criticism of the hook and his failure to do more than shuffle the contents of the jar about, this was his way of dismissing the apparatus as unworkable. On this date and on the twenty-seventh he ignored the jar entirely, save in conversation; and whenever he was induced to talk about it he said something unpleasant about Comstock or the other sitters. By that time he was progressing so nicely with the scales (Chapter XXXV), that it seemed the part of wisdom to remove the jar as an unfruitful object of dissension. So it was taken away; and that ends the chapter.

CHAPTER XXXV

"THOSE D—D SCALES"

ALMOST simultaneously with the sealed jar, Comstock brought into the Lime Street seance room another piece of apparatus—the ordinary chemical balance. The idea was simply to provide Walter with an instrument for levitation which should be more capable of scientific definition, numerical evaluation and precise analysis and examination than the ordinary apparatus of the seance room. Unlike the jar, it presented no definite problem, prescribed in advance. It was the program simply to expose Walter to the scales, in the hope that he might produce supernormal behavior of the pans; after which, the problem of laying down around the performance the necessary conditions of scientific determination would be attacked. Walter would show us what he could do with the scales; we would then dictate to him or adjudicate with him the conditions under which he might do it with finality.

As a first approximation to putting this idea into effect, Comstock brought with him, on April 22, 1924, two examples of this type of apparatus. The first was of crude construction, but decidedly sensitive. After the sitting had run along in the dark for some time, with other apparatus, the balance was placed on the table—and here a major point of Comstock's aims became apparent. It implied light of some sort for observation—otherwise the phenomenon is not capable of being observed. So with the introduction of the new apparatus into this sitting, the red light was put on, and the circle waited for action.

They got it, very promptly. The record does not indicate whether either pan carried any weights, but it is certain that

if one was weighted the other was equally weighted, for the two pans hung in the air—free, motionless or practically so, and at approximately equal levels. Five times within the ten-minute interval following the placing of the balance on the table, however, the pans visibly and audibly tipped out of this equilibrium, the one rising while the other fell; each time they returned to normality with little or no delay.

Tests at the end of the period showed that the pans could be made to act in this fashion by the homely expedient of blowing on them, and that this could be done by any person in the circle. While no blowing had been detected and none was believed to have occurred, the scales were obviously of no value as a scientific seance-room apparatus while this possibility existed.

The No. 1 balance was therefore discarded, permanently; and balance No. 2 came into action. This outfit had a cover, whether of glass or celluloid is not stated in the records. But the pans barely cleared the platform beneath, so that their range of vertical movement was inadequate. Nevertheless, it was agreed to use these scales temporarily, and the pans actually tilted, once, to their limit of travel, with the cover in place. The scales were left in the house, and were again placed before Walter on the next night. The circle was formed about the table, with no hands or feet touching the latter; and for fifteen minutes the pans moved up and down through their small limits of travel, striking the platform at the bottom of each swing.

For April 24, Comstock brought a new balance, which was intended to be permanent, and which, in fact, remained in the house for some weeks. These No. 3 scales had short suspender rods, which gave the pans a vertical range of about three-quarters inch from the position of equilibrium before the downward-bound pan would strike the platform beneath. The cover was of sheet celluloid mounted on a rectangular brass frame. It was three feet long, twelve inches high and six inches

wide, barely accommodating the scales vertically and laterally. It was a three-sided affair only, with a top and two sides, but no ends and no bottom. The open bottom was to permit setting the cover down over the scales, of course; the open ends were for no apparent reason at all.

With this balance on the table in the dark, Walter came and talked freely, but said he would do nothing physical until the next night—he planned to devote this evening to getting acquainted with the scales. Since their ultimate performance would have to involve red light in some manner, we were to let him practice with them in light. He asked us to put the cover in place, and to sit in the red light for exactly half an hour, while he experimented. Asked what we should do then, he told us we might go to the devil. We obeyed instructions in all details save this one.

The scales stood parallel to Margery's frontal aspect, on the side of the table remote from her. One pan was loaded with about sixteen small metal washers, whose total mass of approximately ten grams was ample to hold this pan firmly down upon the base. Under these conditions there was much vibration by the free pan. Initially, of course, it was at absolute rest; and one could not say exactly how long its motion should require for complete damping out. Nor could one feel confident of the absence of disturbing air currents through the long narrow tunnel of the cage. But neither could one feel any confidence in the possibility of explaining, on such grounds, what we saw.

The free pan swung part of the time in simple pendulum fashion, but more usually in circles. There was no tendency for these to flatten out into straight lines or ellipses, as one would have expected if they had been either accidental, or due to a single initial impulse. The motion waxed and waned; sometimes it was practically gone, at others it reached an alarming maximum. There was no visible or audible disturbance of the table or the platform to account for the pas-

sage from practical rest to keen motion. At its maximum the swinging of the pan was communicated to the cross-bar. But there was never any visible vertical component to the motion of the free pan, nor visible communication of the disturbance to the grounded one.

On the twenty-fifth, largely through F. H.'s desires and ideas as to how the thing ought to be done, we sat in darkness for some time at the beginning of the seance, with the scales on the table, the idea being that Walter would get his "power" worked up in darkness, and that then he might give us permission to pass into the light. This procedure became standardized, though ultimately the alternation between light and dark became much more complicated. During the dark prelude on the present evening, the entire balance was dismantled, Margery's hands being controlled throughout the interval by Comstock and F. H. This dismantling proceeded in spite of the presence of the cage, with much noise indicating the dragging about of the cage and the scales platform, but without disturbing the megaphone or glass jar, standing on the table between Margery and the scales. The cage remained in place over the scales; the weighted pan, its load intact, was placed outside and on top of this. The other pan, the cross-bar, the two suspender units and the pointer were scattered at random about the table; only the bare platform remained under the cage. When we were about to have light after this, Walter remarked: "Yes; let the poor man fix his scales."

Ultimately Walter asked that all apparatus other than the scales be removed from the table, and the red light put on. The course of events was similar to that of the night before, but there was less swinging of the free pan in circles, and more in straight lines. With the pan swinging *across* the cage, ruling out accidental air currents through the cage as an explanation, there were numerous narrow escapes from its hitting the celluloid walls. The swinging was so clean-cut, so largely confined to the pan and its immediate suspension,

and so largely lateral, that accidental causes seemed quite inadequate.

We had again been restricted to half an hour in the light; and when we rose, Comstock and Conant went out. By unanimous consent the rest rushed back upstairs to see whether Walter were still there. He was, and he gave us much action. After other incidents, duly chronicled in other places, he expressed a desire for further experiment with the scales, and asking that all the other "débris," including the cage, be removed from the table. This was proper enough, for experiment; Walter said he wanted merely to play about with the weights, to see what arrangement of these was best suited for his purposes. "I am getting acquainted with this; there are too many of these damned little things in one pan." He proceeded to handle the weights extensively, with running fire of cheerful comment indicating how nearly right he thought he was from moment to moment, etc. All this was in the dark, so that any motion which might be heard from the scales was in precisely the same category, for the moment, as the spontaneous phenomena from which we were seeking escape.

F. H. and I were in constant control of Margery's hands, however; and we could hear and feel it raining discarded weights on all sides. I was sure that Walter was repeating here, to tease us; there was too much dropping of weights about the room for other explanation. Weights were rained on the table, rained on the floor, dropped into such of the sitters' hands as were in position to receive them. "Here's one for Birdie," and one was dropped, not laid, into my right hand, which at the moment was right side up, palm open on the table, in its contact with Margery's.

The sound of fussing with the weights gave place to what I took for sounds of fussing with the scales themselves. The effect seemed that of experimental application of force to the pans, resulting in their vertical displacement and their striking the platform. After a deal of this Walter remarked: "Let me

see; I have five on here." Sound of the scales being tilted back and forth. "I think I need one more." Clink of a weight being dropped into the pan. "Now it is right. Put on the celluloid cover, clear everything else off the table, turn on the red light, and we'll try what we can do." The light showed six weights on one pan and none on the other, as Walter's chatter had indicated.

The trial was a long time gaining headway past the point where one might have attributed what was occurring to atmospheric disturbance. But it did pass that point. The table at times, and at other times the scales platform independently of the table, would be tilted; and it became clear that the program involved the initial displacement of the balance pans in this fashion, followed by their maintenance in motion through some less visible means. This time the motion was vertical, and of course involved both pans. When it reached a maximum, a slight disturbance of the table would be followed by the maintenance of the pans in air for an extensive period—surely a minute or more. The table would heave; the weighted pan would leave its seat on the platform and go up while the other went down; then the two would swing gently up and down, with no grounding of either pan until the motion ceased and the heavy one grounded permanently. The demonstration was repeated three or four times, and all present found it entirely amazing.

Experiment next morning left it so. Walter gave his consent to this, specifying the period between ten and eleven. It was made by me in Cross's presence. There was no similarity between the motion I could induce in the scales and that seen the night before. The most violent tilting of the table, far more forceful than anything noted in the seance and far more forceful than could possibly pass unnoted, caused the weighted pan to give but a single leap into the air, returning to the platform at once and remaining there, without bouncing, as though stuck in the mud. The instant the weighted platform thus hit

the table, all motion of the system was translated into violent pendulum oscillation of the free pan. Various tricks with the table, aimed at catching the weighted pan in air and holding it there, all failed. Slight impulses on the table in place of strong ones made no contribution toward solving the problem. I could not in any way induce the two pans to remain free of the standard for any appreciable time. And when, ignoring the hand control which we had during the seance, I added hidden weights to the light pan, so as to produce actual balance in the presence of apparent unbalance, it became out of the question to make the one pan stick to the platform initially until jarred free.

In the seance the episodes of levitation had been separated by darkness. During these dark intervals the cage was always on; in the light, it was off—this manipulation being done by the sitters. With it on, there would be audible fussing with the scales, followed by scratching and taps on the celluloid and sounds as though this were being ripped. Of course one who seeks to explain away what happened in red light will fall back upon these intervals of darkness. But it is not enough merely to cite their occurrence. The skeptic must make some rational suggestion as to what Margery and her aides—I assume he will give her accomplices—were actually doing in the dark, to make the scales cut up as they did in the light.

The obvious suggestion involves the use of the traditional black silk thread or a substitute therefor, attached to the pans in one period of darkness and detached in another. But this, unfortunately for the penny-wise critic, will not work in the present instance. The work with the scales was so delicate as to imply that, if it were done that way, it was done with a pretty short thread, in which there was no danger of the development of slack; and by an operator who was in a position from which he could watch what he was doing. And nobody in the red-lighted room was doing it so. After this, I think, the conjurer is bankrupt. If we won't let him touch the scales

and won't let him run a connection to them, that lets him out. What embarrasses the investigator of psychic phenomena is not the things the magician can do, which are perfectly determinate; but the things the uninformed observer is *afraid* he can do—which are of infinite number and universal scope!

Prior to the sitting of the twenty-sixth, the celluloid cover was, *at Walter's demand*, made more effective by closing in the ends with celluloid and leaving the cage open only at the bottom. On this evening we had a sitting in which nothing of consequence was done with the scales; but on April 27, Walter returned to them in full force, efforts to divert his attention to other things being futile. There was discussion between him and Comstock regarding the best scales technique for the future. It was arranged that we should follow the general principle which we had already taken up. Walter would experiment and practice with the scales, until he thought it would be possible for him, working in darkness, to get them tuned up to a fine pitch of action; then he would call for light, and we should see the balance in levitation as it came on; and this levitation would be maintained as far as possible for a reasonable period in the light. Proceeding on this basis, we dropped the hand control, in view of the convention that nothing counted unless it came in good light. There was much manipulation in the dark, and at least once the cage was removed by Walter and the scales dismantled.

With the cage in place, he finally called for red light. The lamps had been arranged so that Comstock should have maximum visibility, and I next. We were both nearer the scales than Margery, and I was partly between her and them. The weighted pan carried seven of the little washers; the light was not sufficient to have enabled us certainly to find the others, if they were on the table or platform. The performance was given twice.

Each time, the two pans were clear of the platform as the light came on, and remained so for the duration of the light.

The vertical oscillation was small; the pans were in substantial balance throughout the visible part of the demonstration. Horizontal swinging was a bit more pronounced but not greatly so; the act consisted in holding the pans balanced despite the disparity in weights—seven against none.

So far as this particular performance was concerned, the only evidence against the theory that the "unloaded" pan carried enough hidden weights to effect a balance was the difficulty of concealing seven of the little weights under this pan without displacing it visibly. But a smaller number of coins might have been so arranged as to do the trick. Presumably because he regarded the general conditions as lacking finality, Comstock made no attempt to settle this matter by a census of the little weights or an inspection of the region beneath the pans. I consider it most unfortunate that, throughout his inspection of the mediumship, he thus permitted his attention to be concentrated upon what he hoped to get in the future, to the sacrifice of large opportunities to check up the phenomena that he was actually getting at the moment.

During this evening, Comstock made the point, talking with Walter, that for complete proof the scales as well as the motion must be examined; all he really knew about them was their condition when he brought them in. Walter accepted this as a matter of principle, and promised ultimately to provide for the necessary examination. The most questionable feature of the whole scales business, from beginning to end, was the consistency with which Walter took the attitude that letting us examine the scales at the end of a sitting or at the end of levitation constitutes a great difficulty, which he can meet only after much practice and at some vague time in the future. But this remark must not carry too much weight; for I have seen scales performances which I regard as necessarily genuine, and others are reported to me by other sitters that must also be genuine.

At the sitting of April 29, Walter protested that the middle

lever of the scales, which elevates the balancing arm out of its resting socket, got in his way when he tried to swing the scales. And after each period of his manipulation of the balance, it was found that this lever *had* been pushed up, forcing both pans into contact with the platform and robbing the scales of their mobility. This was fixed only in time for May 2; but a very successful sitting of May 3 covers that of the second like a blanket, so I record the first only by date.

Without the cover, in bright red light, seven weights on the east pan and none on the west, the pans were held in substantial balance, oscillating vertically but never going down to meet the platform; and the vertical range of travel increased as the phenomenon proceeded. This last, of course, is *outside the range of any cause that does not provide for continuous application of force to the pans as they swing*; so the question of what became of the missing weights does not enter. The stunt was repeated. Then the empty west pan was held down firmly against the platform beneath, with the loaded east pan high in the air—a performance not evidential in itself, in view of the missing weights, unless preceded by severe hand control. This, too, was repeated. Then it was made plain that there was nothing wrong with the balance itself; for the weights were shifted to the other pan, and both the static unbalance and the dynamic balance were repeated. I shall use these expressions hereafter, on the assumption that the present paragraph defines them. As usual, there were intervals of darkness between each pair of episodes; it was in one of these that Walter shifted the weights.

Walter was in rare good humor here. Cross remarked that the scientists would accuse Goodall of chewing gum and using it to stick the light pan down; Walter replied that at least Goodall does not chew the rag. When Walter removed the weights to the other scale, he said that he was experimenting to see whether the scientists were on the level (in the construction of the scales). Cross, having something on his

mind, asked if he might have the floor; Walter assured him that he might have the entire house.

At the end, after a period of darkness, he asked the sitters to put on the lights and examine the scales as thoroughly as they could. The occurrence of this dark interval preceding the search constitutes no added complication. For fraud during the sitting we must assume loose hand control plus failure to see visible movements by some member of the group. For removal of the evidence in the dark we need *only* the bad control.

The entire program was repeated on May 4, with greater increase in the vertical travel of the pans during the dynamic levitation. The scales were again dismantled in the dark. Attempts to turn the action into other channels were unsuccessful. Static unbalance was shown on May 7, with the cage in place. This again means nothing if we are willing to condemn the hand control; if we are not, it means everything.

Starting another long series of committee sittings, Carrington had his baptism of scales on May 9. Immediately after the sitting he and I drew up the following record:

"There were seven weights in one pan to begin with, none in the other. At times during the performance all these weights were visible on one pan, at times none of them, at times some of them. With none visible, one pan would be held more or less firmly down upon the platform; this was done with the east pan down and with the west pan down. With an unequal distribution of weights the more heavily weighted pan would be held up and the lighter one down. In this event there was seldom, if ever, firm grounding, but a distinct elevation of the light pan. Usually as the light came on, the heavy pan would be found very much higher than its mate; in five to ten seconds it would slowly sink level or even further. Occasionally there would be actual oscillation vertically; more often the simple sinking described. Usually the difference in numbers of weights visible between the two pans would be one; sometimes

it was greater; at least once all seven visible weights were in one pan and this persistently balanced the other one. Carrington explored the space between the psychic and the scales for threads, etc., without result. Numerous times he or Bird pressed down the pan that showed the unnatural tendency to go up. In every instance the impression was that of working against a definite weight or force and in every instance the pan went back upon being released. Sometimes Bird did this five or six times on a single episode, holding the pan down for an appreciable interval each time before releasing it. Most of the phenomena were with the cage off; but everything that occurred at all occurred at least once with the cage on. The initial impulse for all dynamic manifestations seemed to be given by disturbance of the table or of the platform that carried the scales.

"Manipulation of the scales came in two principal spurts, one in Comstock's presence and one after he left. In both instances this activity was preceded by a statement from Walter that what he was about to do involved no use of hands or feet. Under the influence of this, Carrington, on both occasions, abandoned his hand and foot control of Margery; Conant misunderstood and both times retained control of her other side."

In view of the intervention of darkness between the episodes in light, it seemed fair to characterize as objectionable Walter's partly successful effort to rid the psychic of control. If there were trickery, these dark intervals would cover it; and the investigators should not be put in the position of depending upon the voice from the cabinet for permission to maintain control, even though nothing was apparently happening at the moment. Carrington and I also felt that there had been the most amazing laxity in the matter of the little brass weights. The question exactly how many there had originally been could not be met at all. The question where the missing ones were could be met only by the statement that at various times

Walter had scattered them on the floor, whence not all had been recovered.

It was therefore natural that after the performance of the ninth, Carrington's mind turned toward the missing weights as the probable solution. He went to extreme pains to satisfy himself, and me, that while these could be very effectively concealed under the scale pans, in unexpected numbers, the action which he had seen, and still more that which I had seen on previous sittings, could not thus be duplicated.

We had what amounted to a blank sitting on May 10 in Comstock's presence. This brought out a suggestion which had been simmering in F. H.'s mind for some time—that Comstock has a poltergeist. That is, that he carries about with him, quite innocently, an influence of some sort that prevents phenomena. Something like my own G. B., perhaps, only not quite so malignant. Walter, on this date, wouldn't confirm or deny it; but ultimately he got around to doing so, saying, in effect: "I don't know why, but I can't do things when that fellow is here. I like him, but I just can't do things for him."

After Comstock left, we returned to the attack. Walter agreed to the abstract proposition that the scales would have to be seized in the middle of a levitation and carried out of the room for examination. He did not know how long it would be before he could permit this; perhaps tonight, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps a month or longer. We got elevation of the weighted pan, carrying all seven of the weights visibly present at the beginning. Thereafter we got the dynamic phenomena several times, the scales going into oscillating balance with one more weight visible here than there. The hidden-weight theory got a black eye here, for the oscillation persisted much longer than we were ever able to make it last when experimenting with equally weighted pans. The performance was given in short snatches of light with darkness between, as usual. We would put on the light to find the pans in action,

and several times the light and the action were maintained for a full minute or longer, with no appreciable damping of the swing. One or two of these dynamic episodes were accompanied by extraordinary amplitude of vertical oscillation. There was the usual playing with scales and weights in the intervals of darkness, the audible dropping of weights into pans, etc.—the remark at the end of Chapter XXV may have bearing here.

It is pertinent to call attention to the better-than-usual linking up of the circle on this evening. If we grant F. H.'s good faith, there was but one weak link, and that one far off at one corner, in poor position for work with the scales. But it must also be recorded that the cover was off throughout. I emphasize the fact that these remarks cover physical possibilities, and not actual suspicions.

After Walter's good night, I sat in Margery's seat to see what I could do with the scales in the dark. Using my left hand to steady them and my right for work, I was able to get the seven weights off the pan and on the table with little noise—no more than Walter always makes. I duplicated much of Walter's by-play with the weights—chucking them on the pans, etc. The experiment was legitimate, whatever one believes about hand control during the sitting; one must know just what can be done fraudulently with two hands, one hand, and no hands. When I experimented with one hand only, Brown holding the other, the results were of even more interest. I attempted to insert a dime under the pan; but when I took it off for this purpose, the other side of the unit became so much the heavier that it went down heavily against the scales and was dismantled. Guided by this failure, I attacked the problem in a different way. Although I am hopelessly clumsy in sleight-of-hand manipulation, I had fair success in holding the scales against collapse with two fingers while retaining some freedom of work with the other three. I thought it probable that with practice one could thus insert hidden weights with no more of disaster than the occasional dis-

mantling of the scales by Walter could be taken as indicating to have occurred. The net result of all this was to make the static phenomena worthless in the absence of unimpeachable hand control *throughout the interval separating them from a preceding dynamic incident*; but to leave the dynamic levitation as inexplicable by normal causes as it had been before. It has remained so permanently; so that if the sealed jar was a failure, the scales were a conspicuous success in having brought out psychic phenomena on apparatus strange in nature to the medium and not of her own providing.

The scales were damaged by falling to the floor when Walter threw the table over on May 11, and when he attempted to use them on the twelfth they were out of order to such a degree that he had to ask for their removal. During their disability there was concentration upon other phenomena. On the eighteenth we made arrangements to supersede them with a new and better balance. We made certain suggestions for the design of this, aimed at meeting such uncertainties as I have pointed out; Walter himself made other suggestions and requests. The result was the scales No. 4; and since the chapter has reached ample proportions, I leave for another one the story of the further progress made with the new and final balance.

CHAPTER XXXVI

WALTER RINGS THE BELL

WHILE Comstock was in the inventive frame of mind which gave rise to the sealed jar and the scales, he made his biggest contribution—a bit of apparatus which, as redesigned by me, ultimately led to the climax of the mediumship, so far as sheer inescapable demonstration of validity is concerned. In its original form, it involved the wiring of an ordinary electric bell to a telegraph instrument, in such fashion that the closing of the latter closed the circuit and rang the bell.

The standard telegraph board, I must explain for the benefit of the uninitiate, is a two-way affair. In addition to the little key with which messages are ordinarily sent, it includes a switch. When properly wired into an electric circuit, the closing of the switch closes the circuit just as does the depression of the key. But the key works against a spring, and will jump open again when released; while the switch has no spring, and will therefore remain open or closed indefinitely, until a second deliberate act closes or opens it, as the case may be.

Comstock brought with him to Lime Street, on April 25, 1924, a telegraph instrument, two dry-battery cells and an electric bell. He connected them up so that depression of the key or closing of the switch would ring the bell. During Comstock's presence no attempt was made to use this apparatus. But after he left, the rest of us continued to sit; and Walter's attention was directed to the new toy, with a reminder that in view of his lifetime interest in telegraphy he would know what to do with it.

He acknowledged this but made no promises. The tele-

graph with its accessories was on the end of the table between Margery and me; and suddenly the bell gave a prolonged peal. The ringing was repeated freely. Ultimately, at F. H.'s suggestion, Walter allowed me to hold both the psychic's hands during this ringing, while Cross took both of F. H.'s. I was over the corner of the table in such fashion that Margery's head, or any leg, could not possibly have come to the bell without coming also to me.

Under this as under the usual control, however, the bell rang long and short, singly and multiply. There had been no warning that it would be there; Comstock had an inspiration during the day, worked it out, and brought the bell with him, delivering it with the words: "I've made another little plaything for Walter." Hence there had been no opportunity for preparation. If this did not dispose of the claim, sometimes advanced by persons who have heard of the bell episodes, that not our bell but some other did the ringing, I should only have to chronicle that, on this first evening, as at other times, the ringing of the bell was almost invariably accompanied by visible sparking. And there was never any fumbling—contact with the key seemed always clean-cut and exact. I have made this observation before; I am as tired of it as the reader can possibly be; but it must be repeated where it is pertinent.

With this really brilliant initial success, we decided to aim a little higher with the bell. So for the sitting of April 26 we put it—bell, batteries and telegraph—in a five-pound candy box, which I tied with a knot that, Comstock agreed, was sufficiently eccentric to serve as a seal. The last thing done before the lid went on was to test the bell and verify that it was operative.

McDougall arrived after all this had been done. We told him what was in the big package, and he understood the bell and its operation. One would have thought this sufficient: but he feared it might ring accidentally, through short-circuit of some sort, and so he insisted upon shaking the box to test

this possibility. I gave consideration to the idea that he might have shaken loose a connection, but dismissed this as improbable; Margery mentioned it, and got laughed at for her pains. Everybody present supposed the bell to be operative. But Walter, as soon as he turned his attention to it, abused me as a poor mechanic, and stated flatly that nobody could ring that bell—a connection was loose. The box was opened with utmost care, the bell found inoperative, and not one, but three, loose connections located.

McDougall insisted that Walter's prediction was of no significance; that the bell must be either operative or out of order, and that Walter had merely struck the right side of a fifty-fifty proposition. On the same basis, it would be an even-money bet whether I am alive or dead at this moment—there are only the two possibilities. But I should be willing to lay considerably more than even money that I am alive. And while the state of the bell offered no such ridiculous extreme as this, the very active expectation of all present that it was operative gives Walter's guess a fairly high rating as against the apparent probabilities. The scoffer cannot even claim that an attempt was made to ring the bell fraudulently, the failure of which informed the operator that the circuit was broken.

The bell was fixed, but we did not bother to seal it up again, putting it, in the open box, on the corner of the table between Margery and McDougall. Under severe control of Margery's hands by McDougall and myself it was rung several times. F. H. left to operate, I took his place in the circle, and we went on. The bell rang twice. The first time, Roback inquired about the psychic's head; I transferred my grasp of her hand to a point of contact with her face, and had this extended control when the second ring came. The order of the circle during these final two peals was such as to eliminate any claim of confederacy; there was a committee hand at every junction. Besides, Margery reports that McDougall practically had his head in the bell box; and knowing where

my own head was the night before, I am altogether inclined to believe her! This was one of the few rock-ribbed demonstrations which could be cited at this early date.

The bell was used again on the twenty-seventh. This time the cover was on the box; Walter himself took it off and set it on the floor. After ringing the bell several times by use of the key, as always before, he found the switch and used it. We had to turn on the red light to find it ourselves and stop the bell. The switch was stiff; I found that while I could touch it with my nose as it lay in the box, I could not in this way exert pressure to throw it. My own nose is large enough to be an object of caricature—Margery's is not. Hand control was declared at the moment to be perfect, by F. H. and Caldwell.

Nothing more being done with the telegraph outfit for some days, Comstock took it away one day, removed the switch, and brought it back. On May 9, Walter spoke harshly to him about this. Comstock's defense was that he wanted to make a step toward simplification; when the bell rang, he wanted to be sure that the key afforded the only means of ringing it. In any event it made no difference, because Walter ignored the telegraph, and we got him back on the bell theme only by redesigning the ringing apparatus completely.

Of the three pieces of apparatus invented by the *Scientific American* committee for Walter's use, then, each had been of fundamentally different character. The sealed jar was the most promising, on abstract grounds; if Walter had ever been confronted with a final version of this and had made good on it, there would have been excellent probabilities of satisfying the committee. The scales, if one analyzed them dispassionately, were clever enough, but really a frightfully complicated bit of apparatus, offering far too many hooks on which to hang an unreasonable skepticism. I have referred, a little back, to the state of mind of him who knows little or nothing specific about sleight of hand and conjuring, and who is filled with an

almost superstitious horror of what it may be possible to accomplish by the illusionist's methods; so that whatever occurs in his presence, under whatever conditions prohibitive of these methods, he still imagines or fears that there must be some extremely clever way of making fraud cover the ground.

When I say that Comstock displayed an inclination toward this viewpoint, it will be evident that, so far as satisfying him, the scales presented a will-o'-the-wisp. They were part of his scheme for getting away from the conventional conditions of the seance and the conventional complications of control; and the further he went with them the deeper he got entangled in these conditions and these complications! The scales served the one purpose of dragging the mediumship back into the light; and we shall ultimately see that this was a most fruitful step. But that was all that they could hope to accomplish, save in the minds of investigators—rare animals indeed—who are not afraid of the idea of genuineness.

As for the telegraph, that was hopeless from the start, in its original form. The idea which it embodied was to present apparatus in which the point of application of the force was extremely localized, so that one could concentrate the investigation on a small area. In this light it presents a striking contrast to the table levitation or the cabinet disruption, where one is at a total loss to know just what, in physical terms, has happened—where and how the force has been applied. But the telegraph does not present this advance in a form free from the conventional operating difficulties of the seance room; hence the complications of assuring genuineness are in no way mitigated, and its simpler character in other directions fails to become available.

The committee's program of invention is therefore for the moment bankrupt; and the committee finds itself driven back upon observation of the spontaneous phenomena, forced to renew the effort to surround these with some greater-than-customary degree of precision and certainty.

CHAPTER XXXVII

A VOICE FROM EMPTY SPACE

WITH all the vocal sounds that have been chronicled, the question must arise which arose in the fall of 1923, and which was settled to the satisfaction of the ABC group by the two water tests. Are we dealing with plain fraud; with automatic use of the psychic's voice; or with an actual independent production of vocal effects in free space?

The first of these alternatives I will not consider. It is, of course, the natural viewpoint of one who, through lack of contact with mediumship or through prejudice, imagines that the physical phenomena are necessarily fraudulent. No less enthusiastic a present advocate of Margery than Murray, when first he encountered the vocal manifestations, said: "A healthy young woman goes into the cabinet, and a healthy young whisper comes out. What can I believe but the obvious explanation?" Murray ultimately found what else he could believe; and in general, when we cure the critic of his belief that all objective mediumship is necessarily a fake, we cure him of his automatic rejection of the voice. Thereafter, the worst thing he believes about the voice is that it represents subconscious use of the psychic's vocal organs.

As a matter of fact, anybody can afford to admit—Margery herself can afford to and does admit it—that the idea of independent voice is wildly incredible when one first encounters it. From the standpoint of experience and common sense it is one of the hardest of all the physical phenomena of the seance room to divorce from prejudice, from the notion that in the nature of things it can't happen. The ABC sitters are satisfied that it does happen, but they are reasonable, within limits.

They expect every new sitter to go through a period of insistence that these sounds really come from the psychic's throat; and that if she really doesn't know it, this proves nothing save their automatic character. But they expect every honest sitter sooner or later to see that there is a lot of evidence indicating otherwise.

That such evidence exists in quantity cannot be denied. The whistling of January 18 is described as "from the cabinet and from other places about the table." On the twenty-second Walter is credited with whistling in various parts of the room. On the twenty-fifth there was "excellent whistling, some of it apparently outside the cabinet; and at times it seemed as though there were two performers whistling at once." On the twenty-seventh the whistle "seemed to come now from within the cabinet, now from without."

The January 30th record goes into more detail. When Walter had whistled, he announced that John would give a portion of the same selection. "There followed a faint, sweet whistling, altogether different from Walter's, at times coincident with his and again in reply thereto." The sitters were unanimous in placing this whistle in the direction of the corridor.

None of these observations was made in my presence, and I did not know just what weight to give them. With such a surprising phenomenon, one ought to go very slowly, making one's own observations if one can. I soon found myself doing just this, and doing it rather often. Thus, after my first fruitful sittings, I wrote, with reference to that of April 12, substantially as follows:

The "independent" whisper was heard when it was necessary for Walter to make statements, but he was reserved. I got the impression [questioned by McDougall and Roback], that this whisper at times came from too high up for Margery's mouth. The whistling occurred with considerable freedom in and around the cabinet, and here I was even more

confident that some of the effects were beyond Margery's normal range. And after Walter said "Good night," there came a whistle most certainly from another direction than hers, in red light. My memorandum continues:

"Most suggestive of all the vocal noises was a curious combined laugh. The medium and Walter both laughed, loud and distinctly, at the same instant. The two chuckles came from a common point in space, and they gave the impression of being tangled up together, as though conceivably from a common physical organism. But they were distinctly two sounds mingled, and not a single eccentric sound." This paragraph Roback endorses emphatically; I have no comment on it from McDougall.

Again, on May 12, I recorded that vocal sounds several times came from points which the sitters, including myself, agreed to be outside the cabinet, or very high therein. On the fifteenth, there was a performance of which F. H. says: "Walter did loud and beautiful whistling in the southwest corner of the room, at the west side, in the northeast corner, at the east side. This seemed possible only when every vestige of light was removed." He does not indicate with what unanimity the other sitters endorsed his localizations. Mrs. Bird reported to me of the incident: "The voice and the whistle seemed to come from high and low, and from various corners of the room. I found it impossible to locate it certainly, but it was clearly not in the cabinet."

Walter gave on May 20 a whistling act which was easily the feature of the seance. It was not alone clear and loud, but it was heard from various places. At first within the cabinet, it soon moved out and came from the middle of the table, from under the table, and from close by the ears of several sitters. Also there were new tunes: "Silver Threads Among the Gold," "The Long, Long Trail," and a few bars from the Lohengrin Wedding March. Walter said he had had a tough week with the scientists, and he gave a series of serio-comic,

self-pitying whistles, the downward cadences of which were found very amusing.

In the meantime, there had commenced another series of manifestations which seemed also to contribute atmosphere and standing to the independent voice. On March 27, Walter, for the first time, asked for a megaphone, that standard seance-room instrument. One was found in the house, a relic of F. H.'s yachting days; it was eleven inches long and seven inches across the mouth. It was placed on the table, and "Walter spoke through it with great distinctness and force. Asking the sitters to tell where his voice came from, he rapidly moved the megaphone in different directions in the cabinet. One moment the voice would come straight at Mrs. W. C.; the next it would startle F. H. with a loud exclamation close to his ear; then Adler would get it; then it would come back to F. H. with a loud blowing noise; in fact, it went everywhere. Presently Walter said: 'Was F. H. holding the 'phone? No. Was Mr. Adler holding the 'phone? No. Then who could it be? Why, none other than an *accomplice*!' This was followed by a burst of laughter from Walter. Yerxa and F. H., hands joined, swept the table for the megaphone; it was not there. Walter used it to say good night, the light was put on, and it was there."

There is no statement of precise control here, and one must make certain reservations of principle. By normal manipulation of the megaphone, if she have a free hand, the psychic can make the voice come from a much wider region than without it. And she can get the effect of distance and nearness much better with it than without it. Nor is what one takes for megaphone voice always such; fraudulent mediums counterfeit the megaphone effect with the unaided voice, to make it seem that the megaphone is in motion when it is not. So one must be more cautious about megaphone evidence than about pure vocal effects. But even so, we cull items of interest from the records.

Roback was at large on March 29, and there is no fraud more likely to be detected by a wanderer in the room than the megaphone and vocal frauds. But Walter took the megaphone off the table, and talked and whistled through it from both sides of the cabinet. Mostly this seemed well above Margery's head, but of course that means little with the megaphone. Indeed, granting genuineness, we have no assurance whether the megaphone is used to magnify an independent or an automatic voice. We must therefore refrain from assuming either that it will not be found at her mouth, or that if so found it indicates fraud.

The megaphone impressed the sitters of March 30 as an independent effect. On April 1, John said "Hello" to his father, in a megaphone whisper different from Walter's. This was followed by the sound of air blown through the megaphone, of which we can at least say that the effect could hardly be counterfeited vocally. On April 8, Walter "spoke through the megaphone, and again from under the table." Next night he "talked through the megaphone in all parts of the cabinet, over it, over the table, and in every way showed that the voice could not have come from the psychic's lips." The nearest *the record* comes to showing this is where it says: "With the megaphone cavorting at its liveliest, Goodall held both the Kid's hands and Mrs. Litzelmann both of F. H.'s." One could wish that it had been made plain whether the cavorting included vocal effects outside the cabinet; for as we shall see in Chapter XLV, the megaphone is used, independently of the voice, as an instrument of telekinesis.

On April 11 I was exposed to the megaphone. All the sitters, including myself, were fairly confident of the voice from behind their backs, from high in the cabinet and from well out over the table. Ekland and I once got partly under the table to verify our impressions that the voice was there; and there was no possible mistake about it. The megaphone may have been there, too, but Margery certainly wasn't!

F. H.'s notes attribute all the voice to the megaphone; I was not sure that this was the case. I have no reference here to intentional mimicking of the megaphone effect; I simply thought that some of the whispers seemed more like the routine voice that had been going on for so long, than like the megaphone. The next night, I questioned whether the megaphone voice were present at all—surely not more than once or twice. But F. H. identified numerous whispers as through this instrument. It is admittedly very difficult, sometimes, to make the distinction here involved.

With only Cross and F. H. sitting on April 14, the megaphone was used conversationally with extreme freedom, "never twice from the same position, speaking just as loud from a direction opposite the psychic as from her direction. In fact, the megaphone traveled a radius of four feet from the table, covering all the area within this space."

At a committee sitting on April 25, Walter spoke through the megaphone in Comstock's and my face; next night he shouted in McDougall's ear. On May 11, his arrival was heralded by a prodigious whispered "Hello" in the megaphone; the same thing happened next night; and both nights he helloed again. The use of the megaphone for speech after this date was common, but when employed in this sense it was also manipulated telekinetically on a liberal basis. Its behavior is more interesting from that angle than in connection with the problem of the voice; hence I drop it here, to resume its history elsewhere.

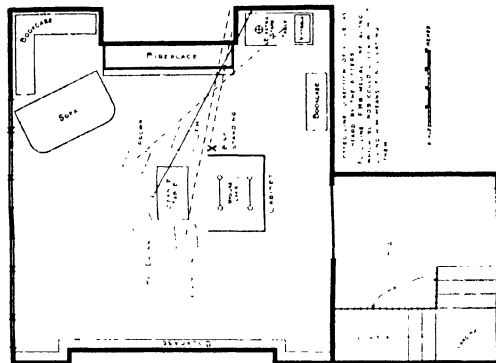
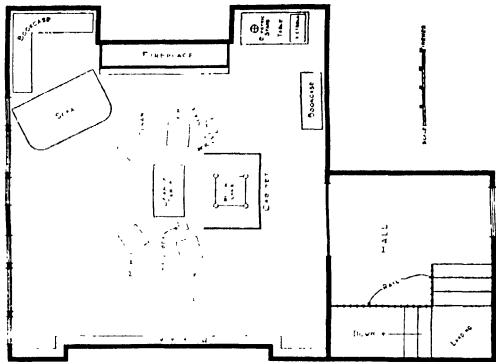
We have then a number of observations indicating with some directness and force that the voice, sometimes at least, is really independent. What are we going to do about it? How much confidence are we going to place in these observations? How well can we locate sounds in the dark? The whole question hangs on this point. If we cannot locate them with some consistency and accuracy, if we are continually in substantial error when we attempt to do so, we must explain all that we

have set down in this chapter as the product of such inability.

One thing we may take without argument. The hypothesis of ventriloquism does not cover the ground. It is one of those explanations, advanced as a glib tongueful by the pestilential wiseacres, but that really explains nothing at all. The ventriloquist cannot operate in the dark. He does not deceive the ears; he deceives the eyes and the expectations. He gets his audience thinking of and looking at the quarter whence he wishes them to infer that the sound is coming, and expecting it from there. When eyes are out of action, his best weapon is gone. He can now only deceive the expectations, and if one exercises reasonable care, one's ears tell the truth, contradicting one's expectations if this be necessary.

This reduces the skeptic to one plea, and we can argue it out with him on that basis. Are you able to tell the quarter from which a sound comes, without the use of any extraneous aid whatever to your ears; or, in the absence of other senses, are you reduced to a guessing match? Any anatomist will tell you that you *are* able to locate sound with the ears alone; that the ears are built with special reference to that, just as the eyes are built with special reference to binocular, stereoscopic vision. The differential effect between the two eyes gives the basis for telling how far away an object is which we see; the differential effect between the ears gives the basis for telling the direction from which comes a sound which we hear. There are but three simple reservations.

You cannot tell how far away a sound is, because to do so requires knowledge of its original intensity, and this you can only guess. You cannot, without the aid of the eyes, tell from how high up it comes, because the differential effect between your ears operates, while you hold your head straight, in a horizontal plane. And, if the sound is exactly ahead of you or exactly behind you, you cannot tell which without looking, because it strikes both ears with exactly the same force. But the generality of sounds you can locate very well indeed, so far



July 23, 1924

May 19, 1924

May 14, 1924

THREE IMPORTANT SITTINGS, SHOWN DIAGMATICALLY

as the horizontal component of their direction is concerned, by listening carefully and ignoring your other senses and your expectations.

I have always understood this to be the case, but have never had occasion to try it out before. In the present connection it becomes of such importance as to demand a try-out. This I have given it, at different times and with different people and under different conditions. As a result, I have no hesitation in urging the reader to try it himself, with due attention to the above reservations, as a means of assuring himself that when Carrington, or F. H., or I, or any other competent observer, says that the whisper or the whistle in Margery's seance room came from a certain quarter, we are stating an approximation to the fact which cannot be laughed off.

I make this lengthy defense of my observations and those of my colleagues and friends, because I come to a point where these observations are of such categorical nature that if you can possibly persuade yourself that they are void you will likely do so. The fact is, Walter had for some time been promising us, more or less vaguely, a grand demonstration of the independent voice, in which he would whistle, or whisper, or both, from one or more remote quarters of the room, under any control which we might desire of Margery's and other mouths. There was ambiguity over the date for this demonstration, and whether it was to occur in darkness or red light. When we got it, we got it unexpectedly, and had to blunder, in the dark, into such control as we could. I give, without any attempt to put it into literary form, the record which Carrington and I drew up immediately after this sitting, and which was signed by all present.

"Sitting of May 19, 1924. 8.45 p.m.

"Circle*: Margery, Carrington, Mrs. Brown, F. H. Bird

* From Margery's left, around to her right, as always.

outside cabinet in control of Margery-F. H. link and Margery's mouth.

"The first part of this sitting was given to distant voice. Bird heard five whistles and five whispers. The final two whistles were fainter than the first three and of different tone. The three came from the corner of the mantel, in Bird's judgment; the two from the windows. Bird's feeling is that the two were quite likely from outdoors. The first three certainly pertained to the sitting. The five whispers followed, each consisting of the word 'Hello,' and each from the corner of the mantel.

"With one possible exception, Carrington failed to hear the whistles. He heard four whispers, 'Hello' each time, and placed each in the direction between F. H. and the cabinet.

"Every time Bird heard anything he punched F. H., and every time he punched F. H. the latter had just heard something. But he placed them all by the windows.

"Every time F. H. heard anything he squeezed Brown's hand; he did this every time Bird punched him. Brown heard three whistles, corresponding to F. H.'s first three punches.* He placed them between the fireplace and the Victrola. The next two pinches corresponded to nothing heard by Brown. F. H. suggests that these two 'whistles' might better be called squeaks. Brown heard three 'Hellos,' each corresponding to a pinch, and got two blind pinches here. Brown placed whispers the same as whistles, agreeing exactly with Carrington.

"F. H. and Brown both make point that always they heard the noise in question before getting the signal from Bird or F. H., respectively. Brown supplements this by statement that he speculated about F. H.'s reaction time. This does away with suggestion as source of sounds. That Brown failed to hear some of them further clinches this point.

"Mrs. Brown heard two whistles and three 'Hellos.' Car-

* Hence corresponding to the three which Bird placed unquestionably in the room.

rington and she each squeezed the other's hand on hearing sounds, and synchronized on these three whispers.

"Though three of the whistles were very sharp, some of the other seven sounds were extremely faint; and accepting observations of Bird, Carrington and Brown as to their approximate origin, the persons nearest them heard them best and those farthest away failed most consistently to hear them.

"We waited for a while for these whistles, after Walter's suggestion that they might be produced, and then we gave them up. Bird dropped his rather painful control of Margery's mouth. We weren't looking for them at all when they came, yet all save Carrington apparently heard the first one, which was marked by Margery's exclamation to Bird to resume control of her mouth. This control was perfect during the production of the other nine sounds.

"Mouth control was maintained around the circle as follows: Margery by Bird's hand, close over mouth, palm in. Palm on lips so close that at all times Bird could count Margery's respiration, and so close that when using his right hand, thumb up, he had trouble keeping this out of her eyes and nose.

"Mrs. Brown by Carrington's hand, back to her lips and one finger under chin.

"Brown: F. H. had no mouth control but heard uninterruptedly Brown's rather heavy breathing. Mrs. Brown's hand held by Brown against side of his face and corner of his mouth.

"F. H.: extreme proximity of Bird's ear.

"The room was extremely quiet while listening for these sounds and any movement of chairs or shod feet could certainly have been heard. Couch and curtain across doorway. Turned on red light at conclusion of the episode and found nobody in room except those properly there.

"Several times when chairs squeaked, the nature of the sound and even the identity of the chair was instantly recognized."

Carrington and I were wholly satisfied of the genuineness of this voice, as an independent phenomenon in space, outside the physical organism of the psychic. The attendant circumstances which were pertinent to the exclusion of confederacy by one not of the circle, but entering clandestinely or secreted in the room, were such as to make this hypothesis wholly absurd to us. I do not know that they would be quite as illuminating to one not familiar with the house as they were to us, so I content myself with denouncing this theory. We agreed that after this, nothing that might happen in the seance room would surprise us greatly; that if the independent voice were possible, anything was.

Comstock, it will be perceived, was left out of this demonstration. But on June 17 he got one which, in some respects, was even more detailed than ours. I quote so much of his dictaphone record of the evening as deals with the voice:

"At Walter's suggestion we did the following things. I turned on the red light in the hall and shoved the door curtain back so that a stream of red light entered the room. I then stood in the cabinet, between the psychic and F. H., having one hand over her mouth and one over his. Richardson had his hand over Adler's mouth and Mrs. Richardson had hers over Cross's. Adler had his hand over Richardson's mouth and F. H. had his over Mrs. Richardson's. I examined the room in red light to see that there were none present save those officially there. With conditions as indicated we heard at least four whistles characteristic of Walter, and one or more such phrases as 'Hello.' They seemed to me, practically all of them, to be in the northeast corner of the room, or toward that corner from the cabinet. There is some difference of opinion among the others present as to the exact location, but it was absolutely clear to me that the sounds were not issuing from my immediate vicinity." F. H. heard at least two "Hellos," and believes that all the others did.

Now please don't misunderstand me. I haven't said, here

any more than elsewhere, that Walter, himself, the dead brother, is present in the room. Even if I believed this, I should be forbidden by my first chapter to say it. I give no hypothesis whatever as to the *modus faciendi* of these sounds; I am discussing only the question of their genuine occurrence. That the two tests of which I quote the record actually present examples of genuine independent voice, produced in space and without the agency of any human vocal apparatus and without any other tangible physical agency, I am obliged to believe. They were produced by nobody properly present; nobody was improperly present; and oblique suggestions like wireless and speaking tubes and phonographs are inapplicable. These vocal sounds were genuinely independent. If I emphasize their genuineness more than that of other phenomena which I have indicated to be genuine, it is because the extreme inherent incredibility here demands such emphasis.

The voice on these two occasions was independent. That some part of the voice which we get as a matter of routine and which seems to be independent, really is so, I am then obliged to regard as practically certain. If it can happen twice, it is silly to cavil about its happening some more. But this brings me to the point, after his belief that Margery has proved the spirit hypothesis, on which there is sharpest disagreement between F. H. and me. He insists that all the voice, through all the seances, is independent. I do not believe this.

Margery is an all-around psychic, and automatic voice is a recognized phenomenon. I grant you we have never proved that she has used it, but it is absurd to imagine that she is incapable of it. The production of the independent voice, one must infer, makes a far greater demand upon the psychic resources present in the seance room than that of the automatic variety. And Walter has a very clear record of doing things in the easiest fashion—of seeking the easiest way, at some pains. It seems to me ridiculous to deny him the use of automatic voice just because he happens to be able to use the

presumably more difficult kind. I do not see just how we are to draw the line in given instances; but I am confident that most of the voice and whistling that comes from a place where Margery's head could be is automatic.

F. H. seems to think this is taking two bites at a cherry. He grants that independent voice at a distance must be very extravagant of the psychic force. But he pictures the extravagance and the difficulty as enormously decreased when the locus is brought close to the medium. He pictures an independent voice produced, practically on her lips, with little if any more expenditure of the psychic resources than if it were automatic. He also urges on me certain physiological factors—the fact that in all his sitting so close to the psychic he has never been sprayed with saliva when Walter was speaking; habits of pronunciation and enunciation which in his observation distinguish the Walter voice from Margery's normal articulation; the failure of the Walter whisper to catch on Margery's breathing, etc. He, by virtue of his profession, is more competent to observe these than I am; his interests lead him to concentrate on the effort thus to trail the voice phenomenon to its lair while mine run more keenly toward other phenomena; and he is there much more than I am. All this unquestionably lends to the probability that he is right and I wrong here; but, in my judgment, does not lend very strongly toward proof that the voice is always and inevitably independent.

Bringing F. H. back to philosophical grounds again, he seems to think that my reluctance to assign *all* the vocal effects to the independent category means that I am afraid of the independent voice. I think I have shown that I am not! I *was*, of course, until I had satisfied myself that it happens; but I am afraid of no fact whatever, and this is a fact. I merely do not see the logic in denying Walter the use of every tool of mediumship—of which automatic voice is distinctly one. If we ever get the case wholly in the light, of course, we'll find out for sure. Till then, we can only argue about it.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ROUGH WORK IN A SCIENTIFIC SITTING

DURING May, 1924, Prince was in Boston on other business at a time when Carrington and I were stopping in the Lime Street house and sitting every evening; and this opportunity was seized to introduce Prince to the mediumship. He sat on May 13, 14, and 15; and on the second of these dates we undertook for the first time the experiment of excluding all sitters other than members of our investigating group. Incidents of one sort or another from this seance are put in their proper places in other chapters; but the outstanding feature of the evening is of such importance, and ultimately acquired such controversial prominence, as to warrant its display in a position of great prominence. It was with this in view that I broke off Chapter XXXII so abruptly. The present chapter picks up the tale of the cabinet where it was there dropped.

There were present only Margery, F. H., McDougall, Comstock, Prince, Carrington, myself and Miss Wood. A high-backed sofa was placed outside the curtained doorway, in the hall, extending entirely across the opening of the doorway. Miss Wood sat on this couch in the hall and took stenographic notes from Comstock's dictation; and although she worked in total darkness she was able to transcribe these with greater accuracy than we usually got from the dictaphone which was introduced later. Her presence served the further purpose of insulating the room against invasion by a confederate. The entire sitting was held in darkness, save for the red-light intervals specified in the notes. I pass to these, omitting only material which is covered elsewhere and which has no bearing upon the cabinet incident.

"8.30 p.m., sitting commenced. Thermometer registered 70°. Circle composed as follows: Margery, F. H. on her right, and proceeding to the right, Prince, Comstock, Carrington, McDougall, the latter on Margery's left. Bird on the floor behind F. H.

"McDougall had foot control of Margery and her left hand, F. H. had her right. Bird had control of link between F. H. and Margery, and of both F. H.'s feet.

"9.00. Walter whistled. The control of the psychic's feet by McDougall was tested by her attempting to withdraw one foot, at the request of the scientists; and it was found, as expected, that the least movement was noticeable. McDougall said he was aware of the slightest movement of the feet, which were between the calves of his legs.

"9.12. Walter asked for red light and to have table turned back. Explanation of this as dictated immediately after sitting; table had been turned around with the grain running away from the psychic. Walter's request was that it be put back with the grain running across in front of her.

"9.15. Details of Bird's control dictated as follows: he has Margery's wrist between two fingers and his palm on the back of F. H.'s hand.

"9.30. Pole fell down. McDougall said that at this moment he was sure there was no perceptible movement by Margery. Control by Bird also perfect at the time when the pole came down.

"9.37. Cabinet began to creak and to move slightly. Bird and McDougall sure no one was touching it. Bird said his elbow was in contact with it but it did not move on that side. A second later he reported that it did tremble on that side. *Disturbance of the cabinet continued for several minutes, the control pronounced perfect during these movements. The disturbance involved identical movements felt by McDougall and Bird.*

"Walter said, 'If you will hold it I will smash it.' Mc-

Dougall reported immediately after the sitting that at this stage he replied, 'Go ahead and smash it.'

"9.43. Walter asked that they spread out. This was done.

"9.50. Cabinet moved slightly. McDougall said it was moving against the back of Margery's chair. McDougall said the cabinet apparently moved forward a foot, and the forward edge touched his shoulder. There was a sound as though the cabinet were moving all around. This statement was amplified immediately after the sitting by inserting the remark that movement was apparently made particularly by what seemed to be the left wing. This wing apparently swung around at a sharp angle.

"Red light for two seconds to examine cabinet. It had been opened out away from McDougall. It looked as though the two front edges of the cabinet might be eight feet apart.* The corner at Bird's elbow remained more or less stationary, serving as a pivot. The left end of the cabinet in the red light appeared to be six or eight feet away from the psychic.

"Cabinet continued to move. Red light for two seconds.

"Part of the cabinet, presumably west wing, heard to break off and fall to the floor.

"10.00. Red light put on in order that Bird might examine cabinet. He reported that it had not been swung away from F. H., that corner and side being used as a pivot. The other side was detached and turned over on the floor.

"Dictated immediately after sitting: When the left wing was ripped off the cabinet there was a distinct sound of tearing of wood as it was being broken off.

"After the fall of the wing, Bird got up and examined it, with Walter's permission, and said: 'Rear left-hand corner stands a yard behind the psychic and the back of the cabinet is at an angle of some thirty degrees with its original position.

* The hinges were still the sole support at the corners, so that no question arises whence the necessary play came. It was on reconstructing the cabinet after this smash that Conant added the angle irons.

All the curtains are still attached to the standing parts of the cabinet.'

"As Bird stood beside the standing part of the cabinet and before he returned to his position of control, the cabinet made a rather strong lunge in his direction. It was inserted by dictation immediately after the sitting that this was at the moment the light was turned out.

"Additional comment dictated immediately after the sitting: McDougall dictated: 'During the destruction of the cabinet I had the psychic's right hand across her lap so that she could not be using her elbow; and I would also have felt any movement of her body.' We also proved here that it was too far for her to move the cabinet with her head by leaning sideways."

The balance of this sitting was given over to slight movements by the table, and is not pertinent here. The disruption of the cabinet remained an isolated incident for some time. A slight move in this direction made on May 19 fell far short. With Carrington on Margery's left, and *myself in the cabinet at her right*, the control of hands and feet was unusually good; but of course Margery's left elbow and shoulder and her head were much nearer the left wing of the cabinet than usual. There were numerous convulsions of the cabinet, all tending to carry it toward that side. Finally the right wing was tightly jammed against my chair, and further convulsions failed to effect further movement. During all this, Carrington had Margery's left hand against his own face, forcing her arm into a straight position and immobilizing her elbow. It seemed to me that her head and shoulder could hardly work on the cabinet under such control without his knowledge or mine—had I questioned this I should have shifted my hand control to a position of contact with her head. We had her feet; and confederacy was out of the question.

The cabinet was again the center of such action as was got during the four evenings of May 29 to June 1, when Les-

carboursa, Carrington and I were present. Lescarboursa always sat at Margery's left, I on the link at her right. If one were to believe that the cabinet manipulation was fraud, one would have to picture Margery as extraordinarily skillful in this direction; and she surely ought to do better with a wholly inexperienced controller like Lescarboursa than with an old stager like Carrington at her left. But she didn't; action of every sort was at a low ebb on all four evenings.

On the twenty-ninth, Walter devoted himself to the cabinet, trying hard to break it. With Lescarboursa's chair braced against it from outside, the cabinet was pushed and mauled and thoroughly convulsed for an hour or so. If one picture the medium as doing it normally, surely she should have been winded if not exhausted at the end; but in fact she was as fresh as a daisy—I have never heard her draw a hurried breath in the seance room. The effort here was apparently to break the cabinet rather than to move it about; and braced against Lescarboursa's chair, as it was, there was little motion. The noise made and the apparent effort expended were, however, large.

On the thirtieth, nothing of any moment happened to the cabinet or to anything else. On the thirty-first, I sat inside the cabinet, again putting Margery nearer the left wing than normally. It creaked and moved, creaked and slid about, creaked and pressed against Lescarboursa's chair outside the left wing and against mine inside the right wing.

Lescarboursa and I maintained our shoulders against the cabinet continually on June 1, he outside at the left and I inside at the right. There were creakings and surgings of the cabinet, and some of this occurred when I had head control in addition to the perfect hand and foot control by Lescarboursa and myself. Head control, it will be appreciated, means also shoulder control; the shoulder cannot go to the cabinet without carrying the head along. The elbow is the most difficult member to immobilize when one has no hands to spare to hold it specifi-

cally; but with the psychic in the center of the cabinet and her hands held from both sides, she is stretched out pretty thin and I think one may worry too much about what she might be doing with an elbow.

Lescarbours here reported that the pressure was at the back of the cabinet, rather than at the side. The cabinet moved back, as a whole, through a distance of perhaps two inches; the progress was disappointingly small in view of the large commotion made. Again I took head control, and with all hand and foot controls maintained, the cabinet slid toward me with quite a racket. The red light was turned on and all controls inspected and found to be in good order.

Up to this moment I had been in my more usual place outside the cabinet, one shoulder projecting into it to support the right wing from within, as described above. I now put my chair inside, and for perhaps fifteen minutes sat that way, with constant control of Margery's head by contact with mine. During this period nothing happened—not even the Walter voice. While I was in the cabinet, Lescarbours reported such position of Margery's arm with reference to the arm of the chair that it would be impossible for her elbow to touch the cabinet. No statement of change here came from him when I got out of the cabinet and resumed my original position; but with this, the cabinet resumed its pushing toward the left. This was felt by myself and by Lescarbours, under hand and foot controls that were reported perfect.

We presently broke up; and after Comstock's departure we returned to the seance room. The right wing was found practically detached, the screws hanging by a single thread or actually out and on the floor, and the wing ready to drop off at a touch. Walter ragged us for quitting when we did, though he had rather encouraged us to do so by remarking, "I shall be working here all night; drop in whenever you please."

I need not point out that many details of this four-night stretch are altogether consistent with a hypothesis of fraud. The experienced investigator does not expect that every incident, or anything like every incident, shall be got under such conditions that this cannot be said. The inexperienced investigator is apt to make this demand. Lescarboursa made it, very emphatically, and the more so because his contact with the case unfortunately gave him no phenomena of obvious and clean-cut genuineness, outside the psychic breezes detailed in Chapter XXIII. He was inclined to feel that if he could explain *anything* that happened as *perhaps* due to fraud, he was entitled to assume that *all* that happened was *surely* fraud.

An unrecorded incident of one of these sittings illustrates the point well. Strong pressure was being applied against Lescarboursa's wing of the cabinet. Walter told him to brace his chair against it, and either promised or implied that Lescarboursa, chair and all, would be moved bodily by pressure delivered through the cabinet wing. Lescarboursa, however, applied all his strength and ingenuity toward getting firmly braced, using the chair legs and his own legs and all his weight for the purpose; so that with the application of the pressure, Margery's chair rather than his slid over the floor.

I don't know why the psychic force should be pictured as free from the necessity which made Archimedes demand a place to stand on before he should attempt to move the earth. All careful experiments have told us just what common sense would tell us—that the principles of action and reaction govern here as everywhere else. But apparently Lescarboursa would have the phenomena of the seance room upon a miraculous basis rather than a natural one; for he regarded this incident as proof positive of fraud. To me it seems self-evident that the psychic force works from the medium as a center; and that when pressure is applied between two points, whether normally or physically, the point that is least firmly anchored will be the one to move.

This brings up a factor which I have avoided until now. Most successful mediums have been open to the suspicion, or even to the certain charge, that on occasions when the psychic power was not moving smoothly and the way was left open for fraud, they would practice fraud. Are we to bring this charge against Margery? Some of my readers are going to bring it, whether I do or not. But my own viewpoint is that, when we have as considerable a body of phenomena which are absolutely demonstrated to be genuine as the present case affords us, we ought to prove fraud with the same precision. And neither Carrington, nor McDougall, nor Comstock, nor I, nor even Prince, has ever advanced any claim to having caught Margery cheating. Plenty of incidents which *could* have been fraud, of course; but no single one that we can point to and say, without hesitation, "This *is* fraud." Under these circumstances, I think we ought to refrain from assuming that the phenomena that do not support themselves completely are fraud; I think the presumption is strong that genuineness is reflected over them from the thoroughly attested incidents of similar character.

But do we ever come to an incident of cabinet smashing that is of absolutely conclusive character? I thought I had displayed one in this chapter. If it has a weakness, this would lie in the failure of the record to indicate any serious examination of the cabinet in detail, any internal evidences that it had been subjected to violence, any experiment to determine the possibilities of fraud. We come now to an incident which goes a long way toward meeting these points, and which is unique in the fact that I was squarely between the psychic and the region where force would have to be applied to the cabinet to produce the effect recorded. Perhaps it will satisfy any readers who may be left cold by the present chapter. This time the record is full enough to stand on its own legs, without comment of any sort; and I give it, in full and without quotation marks.

CHAPTER XXXIX

AN ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

TUESDAY, June 24. Destruction of cabinet with Bird in it.

Circle, passing around from Margery's left: Margery, Richardson, Adler, Cross, Mrs. Richardson, F. H., Margery. Bird between F. H. and Margery; Carrington, Conant, Comstock, Goodall, Miss Richardson also present. Walter came through at once and insisted on better scientific arrangements. Carrington was therefore inserted in the circle at Margery's left, between her and Richardson. He sat outside the cabinet, the others crowding around to make room for him. Bird was introduced into the circle between Margery and F. H., sitting inside the cabinet, on the floor.

[I omit two paragraphs describing psychic lights and other minor phenomena.]

Fairly early in the sitting the cabinet became the center of activity. After slight sounds were heard therein and thereon, Bird was instructed to put a shoulder against it on his side. Carrington soon reported a series of faint pushes against his wing. The impression made by these on Bird was not recorded or remembered. Screws or thumb tacks, or more probably both, now began falling, and from time to time continued to do so, singly and multiply. At this stage we began to feel that something big might be forthcoming, so we set Conant to guard the door against the entrance of the man with the axe, or against his exit if he were already in. Goodall moved to where he could be in constant contact with Miss Richardson, and Comstock kept Miss Richardson constantly located by conversing with her, etc.

After a number of noises indicating falling screws or thumb tacks, there fell down upon Bird and Margery what was assumed to be the top cloth of the cabinet, and they had some difficulty extricating themselves from under it. At the same time the enclosed thermometer fell heavily upon Bird's shins, and was disposed of by shoving it under the table. At this instant, though no sustained foot control of F. H. was attempted, Bird's grip of his hand lay across his two knees, controlling both his feet.

Disturbance of cabinet went up a bit in pitch. Carrington reported considerable pressure brought to bear outwardly against his wing. Bird reported that his wing was pushing him over toward and against Margery. For the most part, the motion here was simply surging outward of Carrington's wing, followed by its return to approximately its former position. On one occasion Carrington reported a range of about nine inches for such a movement and return. From this point for a long time the pressure against Bird increased pretty continuously, reaching its climax when he was jammed tightly and uncomfortably in very small space between the cabinet wing and the psychic's chair.

Presently Conant reported travel of the cabinet backwards, toward him where he was posted in the doorway. This continued off and on for a long time. At one moment during this period Carrington reported motion toward him of his wing at a time when he had Margery's arm extended at full length toward him, her hand on his cheek. Bird here emphasized, from time to time, the consistent and persistent increase in the vigor with which he was getting jammed between the chair and the cabinet.

[I omit here a paragraph dealing with a psychic contact felt by me, which is given in detail in Chapter XXII.]

The psychic's chair now moved for the first of numerous times. Individual movements were often not directly evidential. But on numerous occasions the chair moved dis-

tinctly toward Bird when Margery's left foot was completely off the floor on top of Carrington's; and later, after shift in control, when both her feet were wholly off the floor and on some portion of Bird's anatomy (thigh, ankle or chest, in particular). The initial movement of the chair was about eight inches, so far as Bird could judge. Subsequent movements of the chair were often back and forth, around a corner, or even, to Bird's best judgment, in a curved path. The chair was gradually worked about, facing more and more toward Bird; until at the end it was facing him squarely.

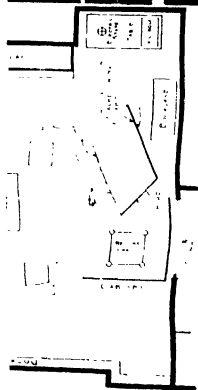
Controversy arose between Bird and Conant as to whether the cabinet had tilted. The action was repeated, and Bird dropped F. H.'s hand long enough to find an inch or more of free space under the front of his wing of the cabinet. Tilting upward at the back was reported by Conant shortly after this.

The net result of all this was a very material displacement of the cabinet from its original position. Bird and Margery were completely disoriented as regards their position in the cabinet and that of the cabinet with reference to the room. Bird's control of F. H. was at this stage stretched out so thin that when F. H. got up to fix the Victrola (frequently; see Chapter XL), Bird could no longer reach Mrs. Richardson to maintain the circle; and he stated here that it would take very little further movement to force him to modify his control of F. H. At the same time Carrington reported that he was now completely out of touch with the west wing of the cabinet; while Conant, in the doorway, stated that the cabinet was now touching him, with what he found to be a corner (obviously the southwest one). Movement of the cabinet toward Conant continued, and at one point Bird verified with his hand that the rear had been lifted from the floor to a height of several inches. Carrington was in touch again long enough to report that the cabinet was being shut together, at least in front, rather than being spread open. Bird verified

this by reporting that the corner behind him was now less than a right angle; but subsequent experiment in full light indicated some probable error here—with the corner at an angle hardly less than 85 degrees, Bird got the same sensations on feeling with the back of his head that had led him, during the seance, to estimate the angle as hardly more than sixty degrees. Bird's best final judgment is that the corner was not materially distorted until it broke (below), and that the folding in of the front edges must have been accomplished by pivoting about the central hinges at the back.

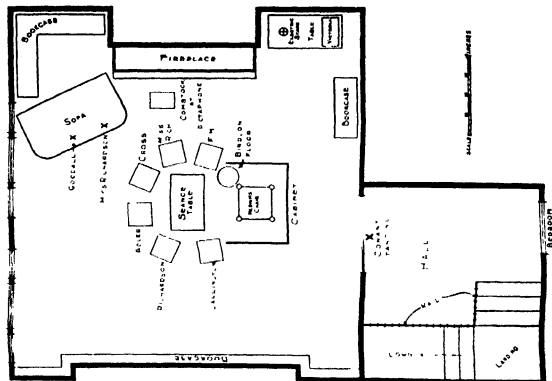
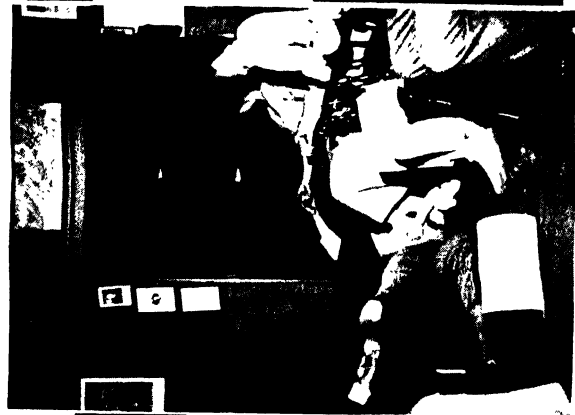
Margery's chair twisted sharply, and it was from this point on that she was directly facing Bird. Bird's corner was then broken cleanly apart, the separation being so wide that he could stick his head clear through into the open, outside the cabinet. The action here was such as practically to prove that the break was effected by squeezing the corner together as Bird had pictured its being squeezed; but there was no yielding of any moment until the crash actually came. During this episode one of Margery's feet was on Bird's thigh; the other on his foot; and her chair moved sharply. Then as always under similar combination of events and control, no pressure from these feet was felt by Bird.

At a moment not specifically indicated in the dictaphone record, but which Bird's recollection places clearly after this crash, it became necessary to change the control. Bird could no longer reach F. H. with his hand; he therefore lay at full length on the floor, his feet stretched out toward F. H., and elevated one foot until F. H. could grasp this ankle. This controlled F. H.'s hand; Mrs. Richardson continued the control of his feet which she had taken up at some point not specified in the record. Some little time previously, with the final twist of Margery's chair, Carrington had no longer been able to reach her left foot, and Bird had taken this over. After the change of position by Bird as well as before it, he had both these feet firmly on him at various points; and after the change,



THE CLIMAX OF A WILD NIGHT - JUNE 24, 1924

The right-hand diagram shows the arrangement of the sitters at the beginning; the left-hand diagram illustrates the condition of the south half of the room at the end. The photograph is the one of the three taken, which best shows the final state of affairs. The cylindrical object on the floor is the thermometer in its fraud-proof cage (page 191).



the only place he found for his left arm and hand was around Margery's ankles, adding to the control here. Control of Margery's hands continued as before, one by Carrington and one by Bird.

For a little time after its detachment the east wing of the cabinet remained erect. Then it leaned in toward Bird at an angle of perhaps twenty degrees off the vertical. Ultimately it was lying upon Bird with its entire weight, held off the floor only by his body and legs. F. H. stumbled over it once on returning from the Victrola, and there is some doubt in Bird's mind as to just how much this may have had to do with its final shift of position. F. H. is sure it did not move when he hit it.

There ensued violent motion of the debris—detailed accounting of what happened is impossible. The dictaphone record was exhausted, and Bird's orientation was too disordered to serve as the basis of detailed observation then or recollection later. Walter seemed willing to stir up the wreckage indefinitely; but finally, at Bird's motion, he said good night and Comstock took an inventory in red light. Four photographs were made.

Conant, toward the latter part of the sitting, was several times admonished by Walter not to touch the cabinet. He protested that he couldn't help it; the cabinet was encroaching on the space which he had to occupy to guard the door. Ultimately the cabinet blocked the door, and did so so completely that Conant couldn't even get his head inside until it was shifted to admit him. Before this was done assurance was gained that no unauthorized person was in the room.

Careful inspection of the cabinet after the photographs were finished disclosed that the angle-irons and hinges all remained on the east wing, having been torn off the back. Many of the empty screw-holes showed craters of wood, implying strongly that the screws had been torn out and not screwed out. Most of them were so badly torn that, next day, Bird

found it impossible to make screws of the same size take hold in them. The freed wing of one hinge had the three screws still in place in their holes, their points sticking through and out into the air with the heads snugly in the countersunk holes. Near the bottom of the back, at the broken junction, a crack existed showing clean wood throughout its length.

Conant, after the sitting, reported that practically during the entire final half-hour, while the cabinet was gradually forcing him into the hall, he had a hand over the vertex where the west wing joins the back, at the bottom. There was observed by him during this period a marked straining toward opening and closing of the angle here, similar apparently to what occurred at Bird's corner; also considerable pivoting of the cabinet, at this corner, about horizontal axes in the floor. Conant estimated, while Bird and Carrington verify, that at times the cabinet exerted a pressure of fifty pounds or more on one against whom it was moving. Conant emphasizes that during much of the latter part of the seance his head was outside the curtain, in the hall, where there was good red light.

On Wednesday the twenty-fifth, Carrington and Bird experimented with the mechanics of the cabinet and derived some surprising results. The attempt to move the cabinet bodily to the west while sitting in Margery's chair developed the fact that, in general, the chair moves more readily than the cabinet. Without anchoring the chair we could get no great motion out of the cabinet.

From the chair we were quite unable to apply any pressure, through the medium of the east wing, against a person sitting on the floor in the space between the wing and the chair—that is, in Bird's position of the seance. The means of trying this, of course, was by pushing outward against the west wing. In this way the east wing could be brought into gentle contact with the person occupying Bird's place, provided the chair were braced against this person to avoid the

difficulty of the preceding observation. But that was as far as we could go. Further pressure beyond this merely jammed the chair more tightly against the person on the floor, whereas Bird is positive that the jamming of him in the seance proceeded from the other side, through the cabinet wall; or else caused this wall to skid sharply backwards off his shoulder, without any increase of its pressure against him. The only way we could give the same result that Bird reports from the seance was by going outside and pushing from there. Even when Carrington stood in the cabinet and pushed with all his force against the west wing, this same sequence was obtained.

Attempting to close in the southeast corner toward the point where the angle-irons would break loose, we found it out of the question to move any portion of the cabinet inward while sitting in the psychic's chair with hands and feet held. Going outside for the experiment, we found that pressure on the outside of the east wing had to be supplemented by pressure from behind the cabinet, else the back would collapse at the hinge instead of the whole cabinet's collapsing at the corner.

Attempting to tilt the cabinet backward by pressure, as of the head, from within, we found a greater readiness of the cabinet to tilt under such pressure than had been indicated in a previous experiment of the sort by Carrington alone. But we were unable to get any material tilting of this sort and in this or any other way, without a pronounced collapse of the cabinet in the center of the back, at the hinges. In Bird's and Conant's best judgment nothing of the sort occurred during the sitting. Indeed, anything that might be done, aimed at the breaking off or closing in of the junction between the wing and the back, would apparently react at the hinge instead of the corner, unless the back were supported from outside.

The freedom of work with the psychic's elbow or with

her head, with her chair at the left side of the cabinet to permit another sitter to occupy the right side, was found to be fully as great as the most optimistic advocate of fraud would hope to find it. The effects which we were able to produce in this fashion, however, did not parallel those of the seance. They came the closest in the matter of the surging out and back of the cabinet; but even here, they failed conspicuously in the matter of the shock felt at the inside of the further wing; and they also resulted in a much jerkier motion of the cabinet, with much less smoothness of recoil, than was observed in the seance. In retrospect, indeed, Bird feels that this smoothness with which an apparently violent kick and its equally violent reaction worked, was one of the most remarkable features of the sitting.

(Signed)* J. MALCOLM BIRD
HEREWARD CARRINGTON

* Owing to the fact that the only cylinder he had in the house was approaching exhaustion, Comstock made but the sketchiest sort of a dictaphone record of this sitting, which was intended merely as an aid to Bird's memory in drawing up a fuller account. When this full account was completed, it comprised so much material outside the direct knowledge of Comstock and Conant, with reference to subsequent experiment, etc., that it was felt inadvisable to ask for their signatures. The original dictaphone record carries these signatures, and so far as it goes is a summary of the above.

CHAPTER XL

THE GREAT VICTROLA MYSTERY

DURING the early phases of the mediumship there had always been a Victrola present in the seance room, but its playing was spasmodic. From the European adventure the idea was brought home of having music continuously throughout the sittings. An attempt in this direction was made on December 31, 1923, with Laura C. at the machine, rewinding the motor and setting the needle back to the beginning of the record. This was not satisfactory, so an electric motor and a repeater were installed, and first used on January 3, 1924. Beginning January 30, a saxophone solo of Walter's favorite tune, "Souvenir," was used at all sittings, and at all was played continuously.

We have mentioned Walter's habit of whistling a few notes in accompaniment to the music. When the Victrola was being run by spring motor, the running down of this would occasionally occur while he was thus whistling. Of course not alone the time, but equally the pitch, of the Victrola music would be affected; and Walter was once or twice observed to flat his own music to match the altered pitch of the "sick" machine.

After the installation of the electric motor this sort of thing was presumably at an end. But during the seance of March 9, 1924, the Victrola slowed so markedly that F. H. asked Walter whether he should disrupt the circle to look into it. Walter replied that he would fix it himself; and sure enough, it picked up to normal speed at once. A little later Walter stopped the Victrola at Stewart's request, thus verifying his control over it. Again on March 30, the Victrola

slowed almost to the stopping point. Walter was heard to say: "Get off that, John." The machine resumed its speed, and Walter said that Mrs. Caldwell was adjusting it.

John and Mark were audibly present on April 1, and apparently doing much of the work of the seance. The behavior of the Victrola was eccentric in the last degree. Many times it would slow and flat, as though about to stop. At such moments Walter would be heard to say "Cut it out" or "Get off that"; after which the machine would correct itself and the music would run along for a time in good order. But not for long; the same cycle was gone through with again and again.

Finally Walter vouchsafed an explanation of what was going on. I give his complete statement in one place, borrowing from subsequent remarks which he made and presenting his ideas in my own words. The root of the trouble lay in the fact that, for the action of the seance, he relies very largely upon energy derived from the musical vibrations. But these are not got right off the machine in the most usable form; and one of the functions of John and Mark is to work on the vibrations and in some way convert them into another and more immediately useful form of energy. In doing this they find it convenient to stand on the vibrations. But when they permit enthusiasm to run away with them, they often stand on them too hard. The result is that Walter's "yarn" gets drawn up too tightly, jamming the vibrations so badly as to make the music slow or stop altogether.

This wild tale was built up gradually. Equally, the sitters were slow to realize that, with the tale or without it, they had a phenomenon of possible importance in the eccentricities of the Victrola. Even after the record of April 1, with its statement: "This slowing of the instrument, followed by recovery after Walter's command, occurred so often that it could not be a coincidence," they failed to record it faithfully when it occurred on subsequent nights. It is noted as of April 5,

but not as of the eleventh or the twelfth, though I distinctly recall that it occurred on one of these evenings and was explained to me in the above terms. Indeed, the next reference to it comes in the minutes for May 13, which I wrote myself: "The slowing of the Victrola that is associated with the Richardson boys was more persistent than usual, and finally resulted in stoppage." The familiarity with the incident which this statement implies is significant; I believe it marked most of the sittings of April and early May. The dictaphonic record of May 14 confirms this impression. "Walter said 'Get out of that,' presumably to his own people, and the Victrola slowed nearly to stopping. Immediately it picked up again. Control perfect."

If one stop here to appraise this business with the Victrola, one finds conflict of emotions and of logic. The one thing that is absolutely clear is that no direct fraud of hand is employed to slow or stop the machine. It is seven or eight feet from the nearest point of Margery's chair. Conant once measured it as 82 inches, and found the wing of the cabinet projecting fifteen inches across the direct line from chair to Victrola along which he measured. It is not so far from F. H., but still a matter of feet beyond his utmost reach. Both he and I have often made a prodigious commotion going to it in the dark.

Fraud, however, is not the only thing one must look for. Accident accounts for many mysteries. The misbehavior of a complicated ensemble like a Victrola driven by friction off an electric motor which runs on current from the city lighting system is a fearfully complex business. One hesitates to guess how many different things might go wrong with the Victrola, the motor, the current supply, which would cause systematic stoppage. And in connection with this thought one must remember that Margery is a person of long musical experience and great ability. The Victrola cannot slow in the least degree without flatting. That Souvenir record has been played

in Margery's presence thousands of times. I myself, with no musical sense at all, am beginning to detect flattening of individual notes; Margery must possess this ability to an uncanny degree, being able to observe the impending slowing before any ordinary sitter. If there is found any normal and accidental explanation for the slowing, the whole incident will look very bad indeed, in view of Walter's claim that it has its causes on his side of the veil.

The intrinsic merits of this claim we need not discuss. I suppose it impresses most of us as the height of absurdity. But that might be regarded as in its favor—the idea being that even Margery, with her brilliant repartee and her flair for mental gymnastics, would hardly be expected to originate such a wild and woolly yarn. And in any event, since the slowing itself is obviously not engineered from outside the Victrola-motor-wiring system, it must, if not genuinely super-normal, be caused by fraud or accident originating within that system. Such cause, if we but look hard enough, we ought to find.

On May 14 and 15, Walter added complications to his own philosophy here. The music stopped, and he explained the hitch as due to a change in the foot control—at first Margery's feet had been together, now they were separated. He did not indicate the sequence of cause and effect through which this reacted upon the music. On the fifteenth, four experimental photographs had been made with the music going; and preparations were under way for four more, when *the instrument stopped as though shot*. Walter explained that he did this intentionally, to try photography without the music. *Red light was burning when this occurred*, driving the last nail into the coffin of any claim that manual fraud was involved. Finally, some days later, Walter stated that change from light to dark or vice versa was likely to stop the Victrola. "I have to tighten up just so much. Clear as mud, isn't it, Birdie?" It was.

Another incident of the fourteenth gave us something of our own to think about. The machine stopped, and just enough of the conversation percolated through Prince's bad hearing to give him the idea that we spoke of a prediction of stoppage. He asked whether such prediction had been made; we couldn't tell him "No," and we couldn't tell him "Yes" without qualification. And we couldn't stop the seance to tell him enough of the history of the case to make it appear why we took the remark "Get the hell off of there" to be a prediction that the Victrola was about to slow or stop. This raises the question whether we are really entitled to regard it as a prediction. I think we are, but I shouldn't care to be too categorical about it.

Another puzzling fact cropped out on May 25. Twice here Walter warned his aides off the vibrations, but each time the Victrola stalled. The first time, that was all; the second time, the dictaphone, leading into the same wall connection as the Victrola, stopped, too. On the one occasion the stoppage was in the room, on the other outside.

With all these complications, the simplest attack is to look for the accidental cause of stoppage. Comstock had always had it on his mind to examine the mechanism, but always when he was in the house there was something more urgent for him to do; and he hesitated to delegate this important job to Conant. But when Lescarbours, a thoroughly competent electrical expert, was in the house over the Decoration Day holidays, he had ample time to examine the outfit with care. He found the Victrola apparently all right, but the motor greatly otherwise. The centrifugal governor was out of order, so that any minor accidental variation of speed was likely to stop the machine. The electric motor was in a desperate state of saturation and general debility—thanks to F. H.'s assumption that it needed lubrication whenever it stalled, and his habit of pouring oil into it out of a bottle under these circumstances. Lescarbours overhauled the motor

as thoroughly as he could with no real tools, and for the rest of his visit the Richardson boys did not jam the vibrations.

This was not quite so unfavorable as it sounds. Lescarbours attacked the motor after we had had a very trying time with the music on May 31. The machine slowed and speeded a number of times, and finally stopped. We got it going. It slowed again: "My God, just at the wrong moment," exclaimed Walter. We were not able to make it go, even after turning on the red light. After a lot of fussing we agreed to use the spring motor, the electric one being very hot and apparently inoperative. After a short run on the spring motor, with Conant winding it from time to time, it went bad again. A new needle remedied the trouble only for a moment. Then we found that the repeater had a badly worn groove, which caught the needle and held it. For the balance of the session Conant acted as repeater, with success.

So part at least of the trouble that attracted Lescarbours's attention was abnormal, and was remedied with the installation of a new repeater. Hence the smooth running after his overhaul was not so damning as it might have seemed. Nevertheless, the electric motor had been in shocking condition, for how long nobody knew. Lescarbours went home satisfied that the incident was closed, and all of us realized that there was some ground for concluding that the Victrola episode had taken the bad turning.

Between June 1 and 17, the records make no mention of the Victrola, but it was not wholly regular in its operation. On the latter date, speaking of phenomena in general, Walter remarked that over half the energy he uses comes from the music. While he was thus speaking, the machine slowed and speeded several times, as it had been doing throughout the sitting. Walter asked for five minutes of red light; the instant it was turred on, the Victrola stopped dead, recalling Walter's remarks of May 15.

On June 18, the Victrola began to be very bad again. F.

H.'s memoranda indicate that it slowed and speeded again, without stopping, at least nine times; Comstock's dictation verifies that ultimately it stopped entirely, with the red light going.

The technique of handling the balky Victrola had been fairly well organized by now. The centrifugal governor has a safety arrangement preventing the flow of current when the motor is at rest; so when it comes to rest, it can be started only by spinning the rotary bed. For this purpose some one must leave his seat; and by the time the Victrola trouble had developed, F. H.'s seat at Margery's right, nearest the machine, was permanent. Hence he always went to the rescue of the sick Victrola, except when Conant was in the room and free. Ordinarily he could restart it at once in the darkness. He never had to turn on the current, so it was always clear that the thing was actually stalled, rather than cut off.

The electric motor was so often insufficient to keep the Victrola going that the custom grew up, as soon as it stalled on a given evening, of winding the spring motor and using this as an auxiliary. From June 22, there was a long series of sittings at all of which my committee was represented. On the twenty-fourth the machine seemed to be stopping. "Wind it, quick," said Walter, "I don't want it to stop just now." Winding saved the situation for a moment, but half an hour later, the dictaphone tells us, "F. H. is winding the Victrola. He has had to do this numerous times during the evening. The Victrola was never wound except when it was conspicuously threatening to stop."

During the day of the twenty-fifth a man was in the house from the manufacturers, to look over the Victrola itself. He pronounced it in every way fit, but during the seance it slowed markedly, as usual. Walter ordered his assistants off the vibrations, but the machine continued to slow, and in about two minutes it was dead. At the moment the psychic light of Chapter XLIV, which at this period was so persistent

in the cabinet close to Margery, was active. As the music faded, Carrington reported fading of the light; when the Victrola had stopped, the light had gone out completely.

Just as F. H. got the music going, Walter asked for ten minutes of red light; so we were prevented from observing whether the light would come back with the music. Presently the Victrola stalled again, and the aid of the spring motor was necessary to start it. When it ran, the red light was put out. Immediately the psychic light at Margery's left was coming back, under complete hand control.

In so far as this single coincidence was concerned, one would assume that it was just that, and nothing more. But one would watch for it to recur, in the hope that it was more than mere chance. Within fifteen minutes it did recur. The Victrola stopped, and at this instant the light in the cabinet disappeared; F. H. got the music going, and before he was back in his seat the light was going, too.

Within four minutes it all occurred again: stoppage of the Victrola, instant extinction of the psychic light, starting of the Victrola, instant reappearance of the light. Experiment demonstrated that the correlation was not between the light and the mere act of breaking the circle for F. H. to get up—we broke the circle *ad libitum* and nothing happened to the light. But presently the Victrola all but faded out again, and the light faded out entirely. Walter refused to go on, demanding that we fix the Victrola for the next night. So far as one night's observation could establish it, the correlation between the music and the light seemed established.

The Victrola itself had had an official O. K. If there were anything physically wrong with the apparatus for making music, it had now to be in the electric motor. During the day of the twenty-sixth, Conant took this to Comstock's shop, where it was in the hands of electricians and engineers all morning. They gave it a blanket guarantee. Conant brought it back to Lime Street and for two hours and a half, during

the afternoon, it ran the seance-room Victrola, under his observation, without a hitch, without getting respectably warm. . . .

That night, during the seance, it stalled six times, slowed three times without stalling, and got so hot one could barely touch it.

On some of these occasions there was red light burning, and no tendency for this to fade was noted. So it was inferred that there was no irregularity in the current supply. Whenever the music stopped in the dark, it happened that there was no psychic light present at the moment. But at one point there is record of a faint, misty light in the cabinet; and two minutes later, the Victrola having stalled, it was no longer visible. Later, immediately after a restarting of the Victrola, a small round light appeared in the cabinet; twenty seconds later it was much dimmer; and very soon the music halted. The record neither affirms nor denies any precise correlation in these instances. On one occasion stoppage coincided with a curious scraping sound in the center of the circle, heard by all. Later Walter said: "I'll have to devise some way of handling that Victrola myself. Don't you fuss with it any more. I don't mind your examining it, but don't take it out of the room."

June 27 saw the climax of the synchronism between Victrola and lights. After 33 minutes the Victrola stopped and a psychic light in the cabinet dimmed and went out. At 42 minutes the music again stalled and again the light vanished out of the cabinet. At 52 minutes and again on the even hour the music halted; on neither occasion was there any psychic light in the cabinet. At 1.11 the music stopped and so did the light. At 1.23, when the Victrola stalled for the last time, there was no light in the cabinet. The correlation was 100 per cent for the evening, and seemed to be a definitely established fact.

On June 28 there were faint lights and there were Victrola stoppages; F. H.'s record, the only one made, fails to indicate

whether there was correspondence. On the twenty-ninth the music went bad eight times; no lights are mentioned for this evening.

June 30 saw both phonograph and motor again overhauled and pronounced perfect. *During the afternoon the motor drove the Victrola for two hours; during the seance it stalled nine times.* The spring motor was used as an auxiliary throughout; every stoppage came when it was about run down. This bears out the previous indications that the trouble arose through a heavy overload, which was not applied normally and hence must have been imposed psychically. On July 1 the electric motor was inspected by the manufacturer and pronounced O. K. That night it stalled six times. F. H. makes no mention of psychic lights on either of these evenings.

The Victrola is not mentioned as of July 2 or 3. On the fourth it slowed or stopped several times; but the psychic lights of this evening were of a different character from those of the past few weeks and there was no correlation. This was prophetic; the Victrola again took the center of the stage but the lights never again resumed the character which they had had during the late June period. No further opportunity was therefore given for the observations of synchronism.

The suggestion that there was an electric connection between the cabinet and the Victrola is obvious enough; but if there is one thing we know about Margery's cabinet, it is that it lacks external connections of any sort. Wireless is another obvious suggestion which the half-informed skeptic plays up, these days, for more than it is worth, in his resistance to psychic phenomena; but he forgets that wireless requires a receiving apparatus, and that members of our committee were very much informed in this field, and would not be fooled for a minute by the attempt to bring such a receiver into the cabinet, or to plant one in the phonograph.

As a point of fact, Margery's psychic lights, if regarded as fraudulent, would certainly have to be attributed to phos-

phorescence or fluorescence, and not to electricity. The upshot of the whole affair is that one must be left at a loss for a means of fraudulent synchronism between the Victrola and the lights. But if one accept the genuineness of this synchronism, one is driven stark against the necessity of accepting, in a general way, Walter's claim that energy from the Victrola vibrations helps in the production of the lights.

One can then explain the cessation of the synchronism very nicely—a means had been found of avoiding it! If we take it to be genuine, we must assume that it is a rough spot in the psychic technique, rather than a demonstration in itself; and that if it can be smoothed out, it will be. And we must accept this series of ideas, whatever our viewpoint toward the spirit hypothesis; for if the phenomena are genuine, they have an intelligent director somewhere—if not in another world, then in the medium's subconsciousness.

If the synchronism between lights and music has been eliminated, the mere irregularity of the Victrola persists. July 5 developed a sitting wholly blank save for two stoppages of the music—once very suddenly and definitely, as though a finger or a brake had been put on, hard; once in the usual slow fashion. On the sixth there were five stoppages—two abrupt and three slow. The third stalling here took place just as F. H. was taking his seat after having wound the spring motor. One or two of these stoppages occurred in red light. For the seventh nothing is recorded about the Victrola; on the eighth it stopped three times, each time with the spring motor no more than half run down. There were in all five stoppages on the ninth, one of them very sudden and shortly after winding; on another occasion, after all but stopping, the machine picked up again and regained normal speed; and finally the Victrola was stopped on request from Carrington.

Carrington and Conant secretly installed a new motor for the tenth; at the start of the sitting Walter announced that there would be no interference with the smooth running

of the music. There were two sudden slowings on the twelfth, the machine each time coming almost to a halt and picking up again. Once or twice during his stay in the house, Keating tells me orally, the Victrola stalled while he stood over it, with a red flashlight in his hand directed on it. This important fact does not appear in any of the records.

On July 11, sitting at Comstock's house, his Victrola was used, without stoppage. On the twenty-fourth, however, sitting there again, Walter got a chance to burn his fingers and came out with them unscorched. The machine stopped twice; each time Walter spoke right up: "I didn't do that." Comstock found that stoppage occurred through some lack of synchronism. F. H. is firmly convinced that he fixed it that way purposely, as a test.

The night before, sitting in Lime Street with Houdini present, the music had slowed down strongly twice and stopped once. In his conversation with Munn, Conant and myself after the sitting, Houdini said nothing about the Victrola. After returning to New York he mentioned it once in my presence, remarking with a very foxy leer in his eye that he knew how it was stopped—that somebody got up and stopped it. This more than anything else which he did or said impressed me with the enormously exaggerated detective ability with which his following endows him. The one explanation of this phenomenon which, more than any other that he could have advanced, had been systematically excluded in dozens of sittings, and which can be contradicted offhand by anybody who has ever sat at Margery's right, was the one upon which he rested his case against the validity of the Victrola stoppage!

CHAPTER XLI

THE HAND IS THE HAND OF—WHOM?

MANY of my readers will be familiar with the remarkable paraffin gloves obtained in seances with the Polish medium Franek Kluski, under the supervision of Dr. Geley, of the International Metaphysic Institute, of Paris. For those who are not, I describe these hands, following Geley's article in the *Scientific American* for November, 1923.

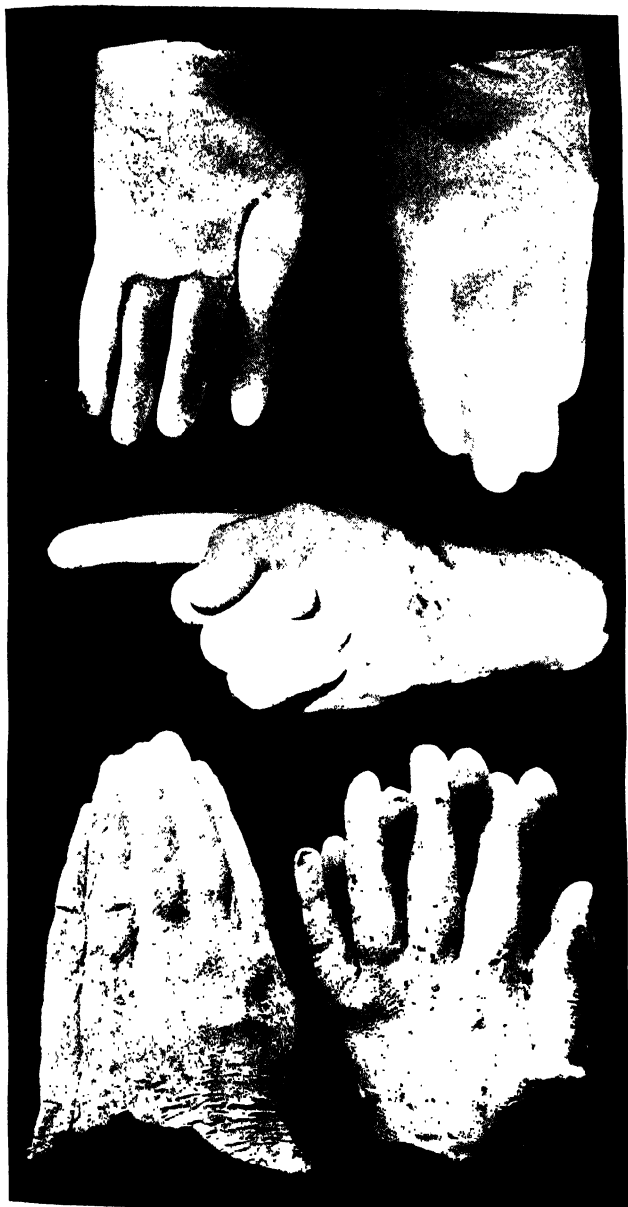
A materialized spirit is stated to be present in the room, and the problem is to get some permanent record of his presence. A bucket of hot water is provided, and floating on top of this is a layer of melted paraffin—paraffin wax, in England's English. Any object thrust into the bucket will, when withdrawn, carry with it a thin coating of the wax, which will solidify on contact with the atmosphere. The materialized spirit is requested to thrust his materialized hand into the bucket again and again, and the hand is supposed to be sufficiently material so that the paraffin adheres, forming a glove whose thickness is limited only by the number of dippings. Then the spirit is supposed to free his hand from the glove by a process to which the rather uninforming word "dematerialization" is applied. He leaves the glove behind, and it is found on the table when the light is turned up. It is then perpetuated by making a plaster cast inside it, which, of course, duplicates the hand—natural or artificial or supernatural—from which the wax shell took its form.

In Geley's little museum at the Institute in Paris, I have seen over twenty casts from paraffin gloves of this character. The anatomical detail which they show is altogether amazing, and one can accept the statement of artists and sculptors that they are unquestionably made from a living model. But

many of them are of such shape that no solid original could possibly have been withdrawn from the paraffin without fracturing the latter. They all have wrists, and good ones; and in addition, most of them have the fingers in such position as to make one or more dead corners which would not pass. A few of them are illustrated, to press the point.

Geley tells us that frequently he introduced, at the very last moment and with the utmost secrecy, coloring matter or colorless chemicals into his paraffin; and that always the gloves delivered at these sittings showed the correct coloring or the correct analysis. That is to say, the gloves were made in the seance room, using his paraffin; they were not brought in ready made. This simplifies the issue greatly for those who are willing to have it proved to them that the shells are genuine; but for those who are unwilling to put themselves to this degree in the receptive attitude it complicates it enormously. For no process has yet been suggested whereby gloves of the requisite quality can be delivered in anything like the short time which Kluski's spirit operators find adequate for the job.

Some critics claim that the paraffin gloves can be duplicated from rubber originals, hollow and filled with water. This is really absurd. A rubber original must not be so stiff that it will refuse to collapse for withdrawal, under its own weight, when the water is emptied out of it. No such original will fail, under the weight of the water needed to fill it, to distend and assume a roughly circular cross-sectional shape. The human palm is flat and human fingers are square; Geley's plaster hands are flat and their fingers are square; hands made from rubber gloves are anything but flat and their fingers are anything but square. They show other disqualifying defects in absence of anatomical detail, but the matter of shape is the worst and the most incurable. Other suggestions for the use of solid originals that will melt out or dissolve out in the bucket of water exist, but none of them seems tenable.



PARAFFIN HANDS À LA KLUSKI

The hand at the upper right is made, with Geley's best skill, from a rubber-glove original. The other four are hands obtained during actual sittings with Kluski; that at the lower right still carries the paraffin, the others show the plaster with the paraffin removed.

Now, Carrington and I were in Margery's house from the evening of May 8 to the morning of the twentieth. We went to bed in the small hours and got up not too long before noon, but even so the interval between breakfast and the seance was a long one. Among the expedients to which we resorted to fill it was that of experimenting with paraffin hands. We got in a supply of the material, and tested out the possibilities of the human original. We found, after practice had smoothed out some rough points and trial and error others, that we could get surprising results. We could not, of course, produce much of a wrist; but our paraffin shells from our own hands were by no means wristless. If we bent the fingers *too* sharply we could not get them out, but by no means did we find it necessary to hold them straight.

One operating difficulty lay in the finger tips. We found that the only way to prevent blow-holes here was to dip them separately and very carefully, after the rest of the glove was pretty well finished. We found the matter of paraffin temperature a rather critical one. For best withdrawal and fastest operation the paraffin should be as cool as it can be without danger of solidifying while one works; for the best anatomical detail it should be as hot as the hand can stand it. In either event, one must work with the aid of a bucket of cold water, dipping alternately in this and the wax. The hand which has just been freed from one paraffin shell must be washed in soap and water before being used again; else the second shell will stick hopelessly about the finger nails. The freeing job itself, when no such complications are present, is simply a matter of patience. With good luck one can deliver the finished shell within twenty minutes of the first immersion. When I say that in Kluski's seance the process took about three minutes, the probabilities of genuineness will perhaps be better appreciated. And I have not touched upon the difficulties of getting complicated shapes, or of making wrists.

The complicated shapes we did not attack. Our attempts

to make a hand with a long wrist, by slitting the wrist for removal and then patching it, did not work out. If we applied hot paraffin to the joint, the cold paraffin showed a tendency to melt off instead of receiving and supporting the new material. If we attempted a welding process with the use of flame, we made the paraffin very messy with soot. I am not positive that the use of a soldering iron, with sufficient skill, might not be made to do the trick. It is at least the most hopeful attack upon the problem; but it would take great skill and much practice to avoid certain tell-tale marks.

The paraffin was got into the Lime Street house mainly, as I have indicated, for this line of experiments. No attempt was made to conceal our work from Margery, or the degree and kind of our successes and failures. The suggestion came independently from F. H. and from Cross that Walter might adopt our paraffin for his own use, but nobody else took this seriously. Nevertheless, as early as the eleventh, we had the bucket of paraffin, at F. H.'s motion, melted and ready in the hall for Walter's call; but he didn't call. At the end of this sitting, I had to make a sample hand to show Laura C. and one or two others what the game was. I did it so well that we decided to try a joke on F. H., who had gone out to operate. When he came back, we presented him my paraffin hand as one delivered by Walter during the portion of the seance from which he had been absent. It took him about ten seconds of examination to decide that we were spoofing him.

On one or two following nights the paraffin was melted in advance, but Walter, while willing to talk about it, never called for it. We got out of the habit of melting it for the seance, in fact; and on May 17 we sat with the paraffin pail, its two inches or so of frozen wax overlying a foundation of water, in a remote corner of the seance room. The conditions of this sitting were questionable. A piece of new apparatus which should have been installed during the day had been put in by Comstock and Conant after we were gathered up-

stairs and while we all waited. It delayed us about an hour, and involved a prodigious amount of hammering right there in the seance room. Walter was slow to come through, and when he finally appeared he abused us fearfully for making such a commotion in his room. He informed us that we had disarranged all his apparatus and all his plans, and that he would have to do something quite different from what he had intended. After fussing a good deal and telling us many humiliating things about ourselves, he gave the first inkling of what the modified program was to comprise.

"Birdie, take that pail of paraffin downstairs and heat it until it is pretty hot. Let the Swede bring it up. There is one thing in this house you can trust—a Swede will never get into a pail of hot paraffin."

I took the pail down to Lydia in the kitchen, instructed her to call me when it was thoroughly melted, and returned to my place in the seance. It was my intent, when she called me, to find something in the medicine closet or the kitchen that would serve to color the paraffin and make any result which we might get evidential, in the one direction or in the other. But Lydia, when the paraffin was cooked, brought it up herself to the stair landing immediately below the seance room. I suppose, if I was not prepared to defy Walter's instructions and stay below stairs until the pail was ready, I should have put the coloring matter in the water or got it in my possession. But as things went, I could only kick myself and let the color test go for another time. I climbed over the sofa, got the bucket from Lydia, and climbed back into the room with my perilous load. Walter, hearing the maid's approach, had sent me to meet her, with the remark: "The Swede will probably fall upstairs and get her nose in it; then we'll have a perfect cast of a Swede." But his fears turned out to be groundless; the paraffin arrived in the room without accident.

We were instructed to put the paraffin bucket in the cabinet, at Margery's left; and beside it another bucket of cold water,

already provided for on my first return from below. After some five minutes, Walter asked to have the paraffin moved in front of Margery and the cold water taken away entirely—"I don't need it, I take my own cold in with me." During the next ten or fifteen minutes there were heard frequent noises which might have been something dipping into and out of the paraffin, or might equally have been caused by gently kicking the bucket so that the contents would slosh around and the handle would clink against the side. The dictaphone records perfect control throughout this period, but I questioned whether *any* control would be adequate with the bucket so close to Margery. Walter met this report of control with the remark: "It's no use putting that down; nobody would believe it, anyway." Perhaps I am verifying his indictment!

At this stage, while the pail was giving out its mysterious sounds, Walter kept up a running fire of comment. "Now me for a Turkish bath." In response to Laura C.'s query whether it was too hot: "What do you think I'd do, drown and yell for help? If I make a hand for you, fingers all doubled up *and thumb touching fingers*, what will you say? It's going to be pretty good." After an unusually heavy jar to the pail: "My God, I almost upset it. The baby is born. And it's a hand. And its name is Han(d)thony." Awful, but I can shift the blame to Walter. "Now, Birdie, take the pail and put it in the corner. And don't walk around. I'm only joking; I've got a couple of chickens waiting for me to come home. Now, Birdie, I'll give you a sensation; when you carry that pail, I'm in it."

After the pail, with Walter and his hand thus in it, had been placed away in the corner, he continued to josh us about various things for some five minutes. As part of the suspense, he polled the delegation on the question whether he had really made a hand or not. F. H. and Comstock were for him; Roback tried to straddle with the opinion that there would be

something but it wouldn't look much like a hand; the rest were wholly skeptical.

At last he permitted me to go over to the corner, near where I had placed the pail, and get the hand. He instructed me carefully as to just where I should find the "baby," wrapped up in a black cloth. Then he made me come back and sit down with the bundle in my lap; and while F. H. (at least) went almost mad with impatience, he joshed us some more, at considerable length.

"I've wrapped it all up to keep it nice and hard. Next time you needn't have the paraffin so hot (entirely correct). It's really a very good hand. I never made a paraffin hand before. I watched Birdie do it. (This is something that every skeptic can believe!) I'll tell you what to notice: the breadth of hand; and compare it with the Kid's hand in length. And notice the neat little hole between thumb and finger, and the artistic curve of the fingers."

Ultimately I was permitted to unwrap it, and the demands from all quarters that I proceed carefully were enough to have made me pulverize it, if I had any nerves at all. I was able to declare that it was a paraffin glove; then, after a little more delay, we were granted the privilege of looking at it in the light. There are sufficient pictures of it to insure the reader the same prerogative.

The conditions under which this object was found were of course wide open to fraud. They rob it of any evidential character which it might possess, other than such as may attach to any apparent impossibility of its having been made from a material original—F. H. realizes that as well as you and I do. There was no possibility of identifying the paraffin. The room had been fairly well turned over before the seance, but not in search; there had been no search. The best thing that one can say here is: there was a degree of probability that Comstock's focussing cloth, in which I found the hand wrapped, would be picked up and used before the sitting—the cameras

are often focussed on the cabinet in advance. And of course, if the hand were a fraud, it was in the room and in this cloth from before the sitting and such a course of events would have turned it up. Nobody could recall having seen the cloth prior to the sitting, but nobody had looked for it.

When we come to consider the hand itself, it is clear that there is a wrist—much more of a wrist than could possibly remain on a shell from which a human hand had been withdrawn. But I must record my impression that the wrist did not look so much like a wrist to me, as like a narrow vestibule of artificial character. I am frankly unable to show how it might have been put on; and there is no real indication of a joint. But I don't like that wrist. It tapers too sharply away from the hand; there is too sharp a ridge between it and the palm, though this may correspond to distortion at the base of the hand; and the annular marks look to me more like the trail of a tool than the transverse lines of a human wrist. This paragraph is the one portion of the present chapter which, as I try it out on him, F. H. feels is unjust; and I cannot be blind to the fact that, if I am unjust anywhere, it is here.

Careful measurement develops the following figures, those for the plaster cast being given first and for Margery's own hand second: Tip of middle finger to end of wrist, 8.5 and 8.1 inches (the measurement on Margery being made to the point corresponding, as well as can be judged, with the end of the paraffin wrist); anterior-posterior diameter of wrist, 1.5 and 1.7 inches; bilateral diameter of wrist, 2.0 and 2.3 inches; outside circumference of widest part of hand, 8.4 and 8.5 inches. These measurements are the more pertinent in that the plaster carries certain anatomical marks, scars, etc., making it necessary to assume that, if a fraud, it is a cast of Margery's own hand. But other marks are *conspicuously absent and conspicuously different*.

The finger nails of the plaster hand are obviously nails that have been cut with scissors, showing the straight segments



PARAFFIN HANDS À LA LIME STREET

Top: plaster cast of Margery's hand, made by the paraffin-glove method. *Bottom:* the cast of the hand obtained in the
 source of May 17, 1924. *Center:* these two hands in paraffin, before casting.

of such cutting; while nothing more violent than a file ever works on Margery's nails.

The position of the thumb is perhaps the strongest favorable point. With my own hand I have scored a disastrous failure to escape from any paraffin shell when two of my digits have been in contact. In every such case the paraffin has been completely demolished around such a point of contact; and the fragments have indicated pretty clearly that a correct mold had not been formed at and around this point.

It was my desire to postpone casting from this paraffin shell until we should have had more practice on less valuable shells from our own hands. I was overruled here, the feeling of the others connected with the case being that every moment's delay exposed the paraffin to unnecessary risk of damage. So it was cast with little knowledge of the best consistency for the plaster or the best means to assure complete filling of the long and narrow fingers. The result, I think, justifies my philosophy; it is, in fact, a pretty sorry mess. The defects at the tips of the fingers will be recognized as air pockets in the casting; they were not present in the paraffin. The pitted and collapsed appearance of the back of the hand, however, was largely in the original, which had been somewhat distorted in getting it free from its physical or superphysical model.

At the dinner table on May 18, F. H. introduced the subject of coloring the paraffin in emulation of Geley. This of course was in Margery's presence; and it seemed to me to represent the height of bad judgment. If one talks of coloring the paraffin, one does so to exclude fraud; and this, whatever one believes to be the true facts, involves the working hypothesis that fraud is present. To discuss the means of prevention and detection in the presence of the one person at whom this working hypothesis points as the guilty party is absurd enough. I tried to discourage the conversation, but without avail. And so, in Margery's presence, it was all fixed up that two little vials should be prepared, one of

bluing and one of iodine; and that when next Walter asked to have the paraffin melted, I, if I were present, or somebody else if I were not, would empty one of these into the bucket under conditions which would insure that there was no knowledge until afterwards, which color had been used.

If this resulted in the worst-looking angle of the whole incident, F. H. has only himself to blame for bringing on the situation in which Margery knew what was planned. Walter talked a lot about paraffin hands for several evenings; on the nineteenth he had the paraffin melted and he fussed with the bucket containing it for an hour or so, without result. He never made another serious gesture in the direction of a paraffin shell, however, and the one obtained on May 17 is still unique. For the skeptic's satisfaction, I will explain that if a hand had been presented on the nineteenth, on the assumption that the correct color was to be either blue or a rich red brown, a grave error would have been made. The color of the paraffin which I took down and melted and brought back on that date turned out, when we got light at the end of the sitting, to be a flaming brick red—Comstock had provided me with several packets of aniline dyes.

In my judgment, the intrinsic evidence presented by the shell which we got on the seventeenth is, on the whole, rather favorable. Had this experience been unique in all psychiatric research, rather than merely unique in Margery's career, I should not feel that under any circumstances whatever we ought to take it seriously without further support through the production of further gloves. But it is not unique; the Kluski hands are apparently not to be attacked with success; and there are previous instances that the critics have not been able to damn irrevocably. With this in mind, if the present shell had been handed to us under decent conditions, I should be inclined to regard it as probably genuine and to urge its acceptance, tentatively at least. But the surrounding circumstances before, during and after the production of this glove

are so extraordinarily suggestive of fraud that if the lady were my own wife I should not ask anybody to accept it as genuine save with the distinct understanding that he do so on faith alone.

Margery's friends all appreciate fully that this is the worst-looking episode of the entire mediumship. They appreciate that in this instance, as in no other, if one believed that fraud had been practiced one could not take the charitable viewpoint that it was a spur-of-the-moment fraud, a succumbing to the temptation of the seance room. If it were fraud, it was deliberate and premeditated. This is perhaps in its favor. If one could visualize the mediumship as entirely or even largely fraudulent, one would have to admit that Margery did not have to produce a paraffin glove, and that in producing one, wrapped in Comstock's focussing cloth, she took an awful chance. One could then very well argue against the probability of her having, in cold-blooded deliberation, done anything of the sort; and one could bolster this argument by pointing to the entire absence of any evidence of premeditated fraud in any other sitting.

Recognizing this incident as the worst-looking of Margery's entire career, I have been at particular pains to set down all the unfavorable factors. Whether the paraffin hand was really genuine or fraudulent, I have no opinion. I am not in the habit of forming opinions on inconclusive evidence; and Margery's worst critic can afford to admit that fraud is not proved here, just as her strongest supporter can afford to grant that genuineness is not and cannot be proved. Where I consider genuineness proved, I say so; and if there were any instance where I considered fraud to be proved, I would say so, too. About the paraffin hand the reader must either form an opinion of his own, or follow my course of refusing an opinion. Whichever he does, I hope that he will take away from this chapter the realization that, throughout the book as here, I withhold no pertinent fact.

CHAPTER XLII

BACK TO THE SCALES

At the end of Chapter XXXV we left Comstock's project of levitation with the use of the scales in an unfinished state, with the third apparatus of this sort just going out of use, and a newer and better scales No. 4 promised. This outfit was manufactured in Comstock's shop for Walter's special use. The pans were much larger than those of any previous balance used in the seance room; they were of wood; and the baskets in which they swung consisted in each instance of two cross pieces so thin as to offer neither support nor concealment for extraneous weights. All movable parts of the entire balance were of brass and wood, so that the bugbear of magnets as a vehicle of fraud was dispelled. The balance was fastened to a platform the same size as the table top; and this platform was supported on the table top by three inverted jelly glasses. No thread or other external connection could pass up inside these glasses; and the rest of the space under the platform, outside the glasses, was high enough to permit easy and adequate examination.

Provision was incorporated for an electrical circuit, in case we should ever want an automatic record of the dipping of the pans. Beneath each pan two shallow basins, about an inch in diameter, were cut in the platform; these were filled with mercury; and wires suspended from the bottoms of the pans dipped into the fluid when either pan went down to its limit of travel. By appropriately wiring the scales to bell, lamp or buzzer, or even to a chronographic outfit, signal could be given or record made when either pan dipped.

The celluloid cover was this time made with a rather

heavy wooden frame, carrying projecting ears which permitted it to be screwed down solidly to the platform when desired. For weights, ordinary wooden checkers were used, these, too, being supplied by Comstock. Walter received the new scales enthusiastically when they were introduced on May 20, but did nothing with them for several nights, explaining that he was going to work with the scales *as* Comstock wished, but only *when* he himself wished. He operated them for the first time on May 24.

The record does not indicate whether the cover was on or off. At Walter's signal, the light was turned on, showing the pans in vertical oscillation—the same performance which had been got with the No. 3 scales, and which I have identified as dynamic. Then, with his thoughts on the static manifestation, Walter asked Comstock whether there were any way in which he (Comstock) could make one pan stay up and the other down while both were empty. Comstock answered "No" without hesitation. But when the light was put on and left on for four minutes, the while the west pan remained firmly grounded and the east pan up, with no load on either pan, he lost the courage of his convictions. He stopped the show right there to dismantle the scales and look for the trick; and he explained how the thing *might* have been done.

The entire east assembly had been tested against the entire west assembly, and found to balance perfectly. But the suspension arms had not been checked against one another, separately; nor had the pans. He thought it possible that there was a slight difference in weight in favor, say, of the east pan; but a corresponding difference in favor of the west suspender rod and basket. If under these conditions the pans were interchanged, the differences would accumulate *instead of canceling*; one side of the balance would be heavier than the other, and might ground. This explanation Comstock tentatively advanced for the behavior of the scales on the present occasion.

Of course the thing presents a physical possibility. But it would be much more convincing if Comstock had advanced the argument in the first place, in response to Walter's query. I have seen a great many instances where an investigator or a skeptic, picking out something which he believed to be impossible, has agreed that if this thing occurs it must be supernatural; but then when it occurs, where he has promptly "renegged" and sought a natural explanation. It seemed to me that Comstock was advancing a panicky *a posteriori* explanation, scared out of him by the occurrence of something which he had been confident wouldn't happen; that he was revising his opinions from moment to moment to keep always one jump ahead of the phenomena.

At some stage of the game—perhaps after the incident of the twenty-ninth, to which I shall presently come—assurance was given the ABC group that the scales had been examined by Conant, and that it was now a certainty that they balanced in every detail, so that no interchange of parts could throw them out of balance. No statement was offered, and none asked for, as to whether they had been found to lack balance in the way postulated by Comstock here. Whether they did, or whether he merely thought that they might, it seems to me that we have admission of negligence on his part. This wholly obvious point is one which he should have foreseen and covered in advance.

During the present sitting (May 24), a clatter was heard from the balance, in the dark. Several sitters then felt themselves spattered with what they took to be mercury from the little contact basins. Walter exclaimed: "Phew! John nearly got drowned, that time. But I got him out—all except one rubber boot." When next the light came on, sure enough mercury was found sprinkled about the table and the floor. No explanation was ever forthcoming, in physical terms, for what had happened.

The scales were mentioned on the twenty-fifth, but gave

no action. For the twenty-sixth, F. H.'s record reads: "During the whole sitting he was obviously at work studying the balance. At one time he directed both pans to be put on; then in the dark he put one weight on the east pan; then, after an impulse had been given in the dark, in the light the pans were seen going up and down, the weighted pan never grounding [the regular dynamic manifestation, it will be seen]; then in the dark he put two weights on the east pan and oscillated this freely, starting in the dark and carrying on in the light; all this with the celluloid cover off." One is driven to conclude that Goodall is an exceptionally good sitter; something worth while usually occurs when he is present. This particular incident vacates absolutely any theory that the dynamic levitation is done by means of concealed weights which bring about actual balance in the presence of apparent unbalance; the construction of the No. 4 scales rules this out.

Between friendly chatting, Walter again worked with the uncovered scales on May 27. With two weights on the east pan and none on the west, balancing was begun in the dark and continued into the light, with increasing travel as had been the case with the No. 3 scales. This was repeated with two weights east and one west, and with three east and two west. On physical considerations, of course, one would assume the problem to be the same in both these latter cases. The pans were found, on the final onset of red light, with three weights on the east pan and one on the west, the lighter west pan held steadily down to the platform. *This lighter pan* was removed by Richardson in good red light, and showed no tendency to stick to the platform. All sorts of theories of fraud are met and squarely demolished by this—concealed weights, application of adhesives to the bottom of the pan, external connections, and pretty much any other hypothesis that you might advance; for the pan which the sitters were permitted to remove was the one that went down, and not,

as in previous instances for Carrington and me, the one that went up.

With the removal of the west pan, the east pan at once went down with a thump; but on the restoration of the west pan, this side went down once more, carrying the other up. Walter was greatly tickled with this performance, and I think he had every reason to be. Addressing Adler, he repeatedly gloated: "Well, Freddie, have we got them running?"

The only conceivable alibi against this performance is that the scales were actually out of order. This was disposed of on the twenty-ninth. The action here revolved about other things than the scales; but when Walter's attention was led in their direction, he exclaimed: "Now somebody has been fiddling with those scales! After all I have said on the subject, I want to know who it is." Conant, on guard in the doorway, admitted the indictment, stating that while in the house during the day he had gone over them to see that they were in all respects as they should be. In view of the great pertinence of this inspection of the scales to the phenomena which had been and were being obtained, it seemed to me unwise for Walter to object and for F. H. to support him so strongly. They were themselves discounting the present in behalf of a very uncertain future—the very thing for which they and I had criticized Comstock.

On May 30 we had a long parley with Walter, which settled a lot of things about the philosophy of the scales, and about the hoped-for final demonstration on which Comstock set so much store. Without any pretense of exact quotation, I can reproduce the sense of this parley as follows:

Walter: Now before we proceed toward this final demonstration I want you to answer a few questions. Are you satisfied that these scales balance perfectly?

Comstock: As a general proposition I am; but for the purpose of a conclusive test I must know their condition immediately before that test.

Walter: Fair enough. Now about the weights. You may have three, five, six or ten or any other number of checkers on that east pan; but you must decide tonight and not change again from now on.

Comstock (after some hesitation): I will be satisfied with the three-to-none load.

Walter: And now let me know precisely what you want me to do, and what you want to do yourself.

Comstock: Just before the final test I want the privilege of examining the balance with the cover off. This will include a number of specific observations but it will not include dismantling the scales. I don't need to remove the pans. This examination I will make in the presence of the rest of the committee. I will then put the cover on and screw it down. I then have no objection if you want a period of darkness, with proper control all around. Then I ask you to do your manifestations in the red light, at the end of which, *without any intervening darkness*, I want the privilege of a complete examination of the scales and the table. I will move and dismantle the scales, but I will not need to move the table.

Walter: All that is satisfactory. But now listen to my conditions. Put that cover on, and from now on, except for official examination just before the big test, it is understood that the scales and the table and the cover shall not be touched in any way by any person. I want you people to realize that I'm not any Gladiola or Sunbeam or any such control as that, and I'm not going to prattle any twaddle. You asked for balances, and you're not going to get another damned thing until the balances are finished.

This was the first clear intimation that Walter was prepared to go all the way toward meeting Comstock's insistence that, after a final demonstration with the scales, he must be permitted to examine the apparatus with no intervening darkness. To this extent it was a distinct advance; but in its complete prohibition against verifying the condition

of the scales from day to day it was unfortunate. We were again discounting the present against the future.

For two nights thereafter the scales were ignored, save in conversation. On the thirty-first Walter informed us that it takes an entirely different kind of force to work through the cover. This seemed reasonable enough. But on June 2, when the subject was brought up by the sitters, it was agreed to remove the cover for practice purposes. With two weights on the east pan and one on the west, dynamic balance was obtained, the pans working up and down for some time. I presume it was started in the dark and projected into the light, as usual, but the report is silent here.

Carrington remarked on June 3 that Walter appeared to have a scales complex; Walter rejoined that somebody else had it first. On the fifth, in a strictly friendly atmosphere, Walter joked about the scales and his devotion to them. "When I am dead and gone you will miss me sadly, but you may put on my tombstone: 'Here lies a scientist, faithful unto cabinet and scales.'" He complained that the presence of the cover was a serious handicap. He has to get into the cage himself first, then sit there indefinitely while using, to produce motion, a force which he must introduce from without. Suddenly he broke off to exclaim: "Gee, little Mark is in the scales; turn on the light!"

This was done, and the balance was found tilting up and down, with one novel feature. The empty west pan in its downward swing went lower than did the loaded east pan in its. Richardson took off the west pan, looked under and in it, and found no visible reason why it should outweigh its neighbor. With the west pan off for this examination, gravity, of course, came into play and brought the east pan down upon the platform. Immediately the west pan was replaced, however, it went down, carrying the other up; so it was inferred that little Mark stayed in the pan while his father inspected it. The swinging of the scales here displayed a greater ampli-

tude and lasted longer than on the previous night; and this with the asymmetric character of the oscillation made the sitters regard it as altogether a more brilliant performance than the former one.

From the side lines on June 6, Comstock and Conant saw a repetition of the preceding night's performance, the balance starting to move in red light this time, and the lighter pan again making the deeper swing. In the midst of the experiment, Margery was instructed by Walter to take the lighter pan off. It was passed around the circle for all to examine; and when replaced it continued to behave as though it were the heavier of the two.

During this sitting, Comstock and Walter had a lengthy conversation on the nature of what happens to make the light pan outweigh the weighted one. Comstock dragged out of Walter a more or less explicit admission that he permeated the pan with some psychic substance; that this was added, as it were, to the mass of the pan for the time. But this was of course put forward in the first instance by Comstock and accepted by Walter; hence it should not be too highly regarded even by one who accepts all that is claimed for the Walter personality. Comstock asked whether it would not be possible for Walter, some time, to leave a little of this extraneous substance in or attached to a pan or a block of wood, so that it might be weighed on an independent balance to determine the actual increase in mass. Walter thought it would be possible, without harm to Margery, provided the other balance were near by.

With the weights standing two against one on June 7, the scales were again made to work, the excursions of the pans being this time of the maximum depth possible without striking the platform. After a period of darkness the company was instructed to put on the cage—Walter had not yet attempted the manipulation, himself, of the newer and heavier cage. With the cover on the demonstration just given was

repeated; this being the first time Walter had actually done anything with the new scales under cover.

At the close of this sitting the scales, at Walter's instructions, were left with three weights on the east pan and one on the west, strict injunctions being given against their disturbance for twenty-four hours. Sitting on the eighth, Walter talked and preached for a long time, but ultimately remarked, "Now we must get back to those damned scales." The sitters were instructed to remove one of the three weights from the east pan. Dynamic swinging of the pans was then started in the dark and projected into the light, as usual. With the vertical oscillation proceeding freely in the light, under the two-to-one load, the third weight was, following Walter's instructions, dropped back on the east pan. Under the resulting three-to-one load the scales promptly came to rest, affording a measure of the upper limit of the force which Walter was at the moment exerting on the scales. The experiment was repeated several times, always with the same result. Walter indicated that it was an experiment for him as well as for the sitters. He was working toward a five-to-one load and would ultimately be able to handle this. The technique was difficult; and he wanted the single weight to remain on the west pan, because he had to build up all his force about it. This was consistent with his previous demand that the scales and other apparatus be left undisturbed from night to night.

On June 10 Walter met one of the objections to his previous attitude. He revised his standing instructions, and gave permission for the scales to be examined *ad libitum* during sittings. Between sittings he was still insistent that they be not touched. There were no physical phenomena at all this evening.

Again on June 12 there was a seance devoid of anything save talk by Walter. He asked that the cover be lifted a little *and supported on three checkers, leaving a crack under it.* The idea was that he found it easy enough to get into the cage

but hard to get out; and he wanted to practice this. Yes, it sounds just as fishy to me as it does to you; but I am only the reporter. After about five minutes he announced that the problem of the exit was solved; the checkers might be removed. He represented himself as then continuing the practice in getting out; and presently he said: "Comstock, I've got you; I can get out just as easily as I can get in."

Walter spent a good deal of time on June 13, experimenting, with the aid of the sitters, with different strengths of red light (Comstock having supplied a rheostat of wide range for regulating this) and different openings of the Victrola doors. After he had got the right combination here he ordered a thorough dismantling and examination of the scales. The unloaded pans were tested, and their balance found to be perfect. Then they were loaded four-to-one. The red light was turned on for periods announced in advance by Walter, timed accurately, and running as high as one minute. During each interval of light the pans with their unequal loads were seen in active motion. This was so violent that, at the end of each vertical stroke, the pans groaned as though grounded, although they were seen not to touch the platform. The control of the apparatus seemed so complete that Walter even attempted dance motions in jazz time with the pans. The sitters were thoroughly excited and highly gratified, but were instructed by Walter not to tell Comstock what they had seen, because it might not be possible to do it next time. It would be too bad to disappoint him, and very pleasant if it were possible to surprise him.

Walter terminated this sitting with a threat which has been made so often that it is no longer taken seriously. "When this is done I am going away, and I shan't come back. My crowd came here because we liked you people, and you kept us here working at this damned thing." On the fourteenth he had more to say on this point, in a sitting devoted wholly to conversation and devoid of physical phenomena.

Walter insisted on a circle large enough to include all fifteen persons present on June 15; no record was kept of the arrangement. With a two-to-one load the scales were found, on turning on the light, to oscillate as though equally loaded; and it was believed, though with no certainty, that this motion started with the incidence of the light. After another interval of darkness the coming of the light found the unequally loaded pans at perfect rest in the air, neither being grounded, both being at the same height from the platform—a new phenomenon and a very interesting one. On the sixteenth there was rearrangement of the scales and weights by Comstock at Walter's request but no psychic action of the balance.

Walter had Comstock make the most elaborate tests of the scales on June 17. He found that each checker weighed a trifle over five grams. And I blush to confess that he found one of them materially lighter than the others, and took it away, replacing it with another. It was only through the sheerest good fortune that the phenomena obtained with the No. 4 scales include sufficient dynamic and photographic (Chapter XLIII) incidents to prevent the skeptic from attributing them to this light checker. Only by the rankest luck do we escape the necessity, through Comstock's negligence in not weighing his weights until they had been in use for a month, for throwing away the whole of this month's work with the scales. I suppose he would justify himself on the ground that he was discounting the present against the future, but that seems no adequate reason for omitting such an elementary precaution as this.

Continuing the same examination, the balances were carefully gone over with a magnet and found to have no properties in this direction. With the cover screwed in place, painstaking test was made for possibilities of fraudulent manipulation—without result, of course. Then, while engaged in other manifestations, Walter gave his customary humorous assurances that he was working on the scales all the time, doing

nothing else, intending to do nothing else until he had scored a full success with the scales.

Late in the sitting he turned his hand to the scales, which carried six checkers on the west pan and none on the east. In the dark the celluloid of the cover could be heard to crackle and bulge, whereon Walter cautioned his "gang" to be more careful, not to use so much force. Then the scales could be heard see-sawing in the dark. From time to time Walter would give warning that he was going away for one, five, ten, even fifteen minutes, while the sitters remained in red light; but there was no indication that he actually went. "The only thing I'm getting used to now, Comstock, is the one extra checker; so cheer up." F. H. asked him whether he was now able to get in the cover without trouble. "Oh, I can get in easily enough, but it's tough getting out. My forked tail sticks."

There was conversation about the scales on June 19, and the load was changed to the six-to-one arrangement, which was retained for the sitting of June 21. The Victrola record was a new one—"Linger Awhile," a very catchy piece, louder and livelier than "Souvenir." It pleased Walter immensely, but made conversation with him difficult. He whistled to it off and on for a quarter-hour, then called for red light. The cage was on the scales and screwed down; they were tilting up and down with the utmost vigor. The episode was repeated, eight times in all. Sometimes the pans swung freely; sometimes they worked in time with the music; sometimes they stood in static balance despite the disparity in load. Quite aside from any single phenomenon which they presented, this ability to make them do different things under identical external conditions, with the screwed-down cover serving as absolute barrier against fraudulent manipulation from without, was plainly a psychic manifestation, and a striking one.

After this sitting, which was distinctly the climax of the scales manipulations, Walter never again gave a large dis-

play with this apparatus. On the twenty-second a sitting was attempted with some persistence, but the result was an absolute blank, with the exception of the psychic light described on page 366. There was, however, a strong argument between Comstock and F. H., who disputed with much acrimony the details of the agreement with Walter of May 25. Some of my readers will see a connection between this and the blank sitting, or even between this and Walter's practical abandonment of the scales.

Abandon them he did, in large measure. On June 23 he said he could do them, but didn't know when. On the twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth we sat, Carrington and I being always present, Comstock and Conant usually. The scales were non-existent so far as these evenings were concerned. Sittings on the next four evenings, with Carrington, Comstock and Conant always present, developed a variety of interesting phenomena but the scales continued to be ignored. Starting July 3, Carrington and Keating sat every evening up to and including the eleventh, sometimes with Comstock or Conant or both. Keating, to borrow an expression from F. H., came to scoff and remained to pray. He was satisfied with the genuineness of the phenomena, or at least with the genuineness of some of them—I make the reservation because I do not know just what disposition he makes in his own mind of the things that happened in his presence without adequate proof. When the phenomena thus pass inspection by a professional conjurer, and a very clever one in the bargain, we may be sure that the sittings have brought out something worth while. But still the scales remained out of the picture.

On July 12 the cover, which had been undisturbed for some days, was removed. All six weights were left in the east pan. Shortly the scales were violently shaken in the darkness, as though being pounded by some solid object. *The light was given and the west pan and carrier were found*

off the supporting hook. They were replaced and darkness restored. Then the weights were removed at Walter's request, the pans being in good balance after this had been done. One weight was added to the east pan—whether by Walter or the sitters is not indicated—and the next onset of light found them still balanced, in spite of this. Next night Walter told the group to be of good cheer, he had not forgotten the scales; but he did nothing with them. On July 16 he was heard to work them vigorously in the dark, but nothing further came of this gesture. On the twentieth the report states that the scales were tipped, but that is all.

And that is the end of the scales. On August 3 they had passed so definitely out of the picture that they were removed from the table and laid distinctly aside. If it be asked why an instrument with which such brilliant success had been achieved should be so suddenly and completely discarded, I shall have to refer the inquirer to Walter. In my own mind, I have rather inclined to the idea that Walter tired of the scales, and that the dispute of June 21, which was of an unreasonableness particularly flagrant, made him sore in addition to his fatigue. He has a habit of quietly withdrawing from any project when he doesn't like the way the sitters are handling it. It may well be that the willingness of the sitters to quarrel about something that was down in the record, their willingness to dispute the record if it did not agree with their own personal recollections and understandings of what had been said, induced in him some such reaction as: "Oh, what's the use?"

CHAPTER XLIII

WITH CAMERA AND SCALES

IF now and again I criticize Comstock, it must not be overlooked that he made more real contributions to the scientific consideration of the mediumship than all other observers combined; and that these far outweigh any objections which may be felt to his conduct of the case in detail. Perhaps the biggest debt of all which the case owes him is a photographic one.

Some years ago, Comstock had an interesting experience. He met a young lady of clairvoyant powers, who was continually seeing things which, in physical terms, were not there. As is usually the case with clairvoyance, the visions revolved for the most part about human forms; and I believe that the subject, like most clairvoyants, regarded them as actually those of spirits. All of which is commonplace enough. But Comstock made the very uncommonplace discovery that the lady's range of vision extended far past the point in the violet end of the spectrum where most of us cease to get any further retinal stimuli, so that she had actual ultra-violet vision to a degree greatly beyond anything he had ever heard of before.

One is justified in coupling these facts into speculation whether there is not an invisible world of reality around us, visible in terms of the ultra-violet if only we were able to see with this light. Comstock made this speculation and it was his intent to test it out photographically. In one direction this presents great simplicity, because all the ordinary photographic emulsions are sensitive throughout the region of the ultra-violet. In another direction it presents complexities,

because all ordinary glasses are quite opaque to the ultra-violet, and a special lens would be needed of special material transparent thereto. Before Comstock had got the thing ready to try out, the young lady put an end to the project by passing, herself, into the world of shadows.

The one speculation which, with Comstock, we have just made, drives us to another—would the psychic world of the seance room be any better visible in ultra-violet than in ordinary light? Comstock had asked this second question, and had determined to attempt an answer when the opportunity came. The Margery case he recognized as the opportunity. The records do not indicate just when it was that he introduced into the Lime Street seance room two large cameras, with high-grade quartz lenzes of practically one hundred per cent transparency to the ultra-violet; together with an expensive, high-power, quartz mercury-vapor lamp which generates a light peculiarly rich in ultra-violet wavelengths. These were not in the house in late April, and were in mid-May. From time to time, during the sittings of the latter half of May, exposures were made, with Walter's consent and often at his signal, during or after seances. The records are silent here, because Comstock never reported back until after F. H.'s own record had been made up, and never delivered his own records to F. H. None of the results were at all clean-cut, or suitable for reproduction. But several of the plates exposed during this period showed curious, indefinable white patches, which could apparently not be an accident of photography and which were certainly not due to fraud; for Comstock and Conant did the photographic work from start to finish.

About one of these patch pictures a curious incident revolved. Aleck Cross insisted that certain vague black markings on the cloudy white ground of the blotch constituted a face. Aleck's credulity had by this time reached a stage where, in sheer self-respect, it became necessary for the other ABC

members to laugh his suggestion down. But when Lescarboursa was looking at these prints, he renewed the suggestion; and, looking at it now, more respectfully in the light of this more respectable origin, F. H. and the others agreed that Aleck had been right. A very questionable recognition of this extra as Mark Richardson was attempted by one or two sitters.

Lescarboursa had brought with him his own pocket camera, which uses film-pack negative. The records fail to state on what night it was that, in Comstock's absence or after his departure, Lescarboursa looked over the ultra-violet lamp, decided that he knew how to run it, and was prevailed upon to take some pictures at the end of the seance. With Margery in her accustomed place in the cabinet, he pointed his camera at her and took five exposures, moving up closer each time. There was much jesting about the state of affairs which would ensue if a psychic photograph, taken by the Managing Editor, were to win the *Scientific American* award. The films were developed by the Herbert & Huesgen Co., of New York, in the regular course of business. Three of them—the first, second and fourth exposed—show something that does not belong.

One puzzling mark will be recognized as a hinge in the cabinet back; and the smaller bright spot, on the very edge of the cabinet in the first two views, also "belongs"—it is a daub of luminous paint placed there to locate the cabinet with certainty for all the sitters. But the one higher up, on these two exposures, with a fuzzy tailing-off effect to the left, corresponds to nothing known to have been there. And after being absent in No. 3, it comes back in No. 4—larger, because closer to the camera. This helps to demonstrate that it was not a camera defect. So does the fact that, in terms of the paper negative, it is in no two of the three cases in the same position; so does the fact that Lescarboursa has taken hundreds of pictures with that camera, before and since, and never again had anything like this.



THE LESCARBOURA PHOTOGRAPHS OF JUNE 1, 1924

The extra mark is barely included at the extreme corner of the upper picture; it is more easily located in the others. For fuller description, see page 360.

Neither does the extraneous object appear at the same point in the field, in any two views. It has moved very slightly between No. 1 and No. 2. Then, apparently, for No. 3 the camera went so far forward as to throw this object out of the picture; but it would seem to have kept right on moving, and to have moved back in again for No. 4. At least, its location on the three prints is consistent with such an explanation. Its absence in No. 5 might be blamed upon its having gone out or having got behind Margery. Lescarboursa has no normal explanation for it, and he is a very experienced photographer; neither have I.

The exposures were all of from fifteen to thirty seconds; the lens was an ordinary one, with no transparency to the ultra-violet. Comstock's expensive lamp in this instance was just a source of light—nothing more.

Lescarboursa's success in getting extraneous marks without any ultra-violet effect led Comstock to try flashlights on June 6. The record does not indicate whether the red light had or had not been on at the moment when these were taken; the point would be of interest to one who feared that there might have been fraudulent preparation just before the exposures were made. Walter expressed the belief that these would show something in the form of a new and strange light, somewhere near the west pan of the scales. One of them did show a halo of light over the west end of the balance bar; another a smaller glow over the entire bar. These two exposures show the heavy west pan off the platform, in static or dynamic levitation. The third print, showing this pan grounded normally, shows nothing extraneous. The marks apparently correspond to work being done on the balance. Comstock never delivered prints to F. H., I believe because he regarded the extra marks as too formless to justify their publication.

They were, however, obviously of such character as to demand that the photographic attack be continued. The ultra-violet lamp had received a black eye; and the flashlight

was used on June 8, in an elaborate photographic experiment. Both cameras were used, set side by side, so as to give stereoscopic views, in pairs, showing the same field from different angles. Walter again expressed confidence, saying: "I think you will be able to see what is there." The results may fairly be regarded as affording photographic proof of supernormal action upon the scales, and a milestone is thereby marked in the scientific consideration of the case.

No less than seven of the twelve plates exposed show "what is there"; and all agree as to its nature—a curious, semi-transparent cylinder, looking about as it would if made of glass or celluloid. Two exposures taken coincidentally, and showing the same thing from different angles, reveal the east pan down and carrying three checkers; the west pan carries one weight, which does not show because the pan is up. The "psychic cylinder" stands on this west pan; it is apparently five or six inches long and three or a little less in diameter. It stands on its base. Its weight, if weight it has, is insufficient to bring the pan down against that of the two extra checkers on the other side.

Of another pair of exposures, both show the cylinder, but indicate a somewhat greater height and perhaps a slightly smaller diameter. The position on the pan is a trifle different, but otherwise the description of the first pair applies to this one.

Of a third pair, both prints show the scale-pans in levitation, the flash catching them at almost the same level. The psychic cylinder stands now not on the pan at all, but off, upon the platform. That is: put the cylinder on, and the pan that carries it goes up and stays up; take it off, and one gets "dynamic balance," the light pan from which the cylinder has just been moved balancing with the heavy one. F. H. has a theory here: that Walter impregnates the light pan with a psychic element of added weight; and that then, if he wishes it to stay up where it apparently belongs, he

has to put in it or on it something which can be visualized as a psychic suction pump, to hold it up. This, even if you don't like it or don't believe it, at least fits the facts and challenges you to meet them in any better way.

What is perhaps the clearest of all the cylinders comes on a single plate, the mate of which failed to show anything extraneous. It stands on the west pan and this pan is up, as required by the precedent of the other photographs. This is in one respect the most remarkable of all the exposures. Two cameras are set up, side by side, and trained upon the same field. One of them records an extra image and the other does not! This meets every conceivable hypothesis of fraud outside the camera; and under Comstock's auspices, fraud within the photographic process will hardly be alleged. The camera, the plates, the photographic routine from start to finish were Comstock's. The entire phenomenon revolves about the investigator, the medium's presence being obviously the mere innocent catalyzing force. The result must necessarily be supernatural; and in these seven prints we have what I hope may some day be recognized as a landmark of psychic science.

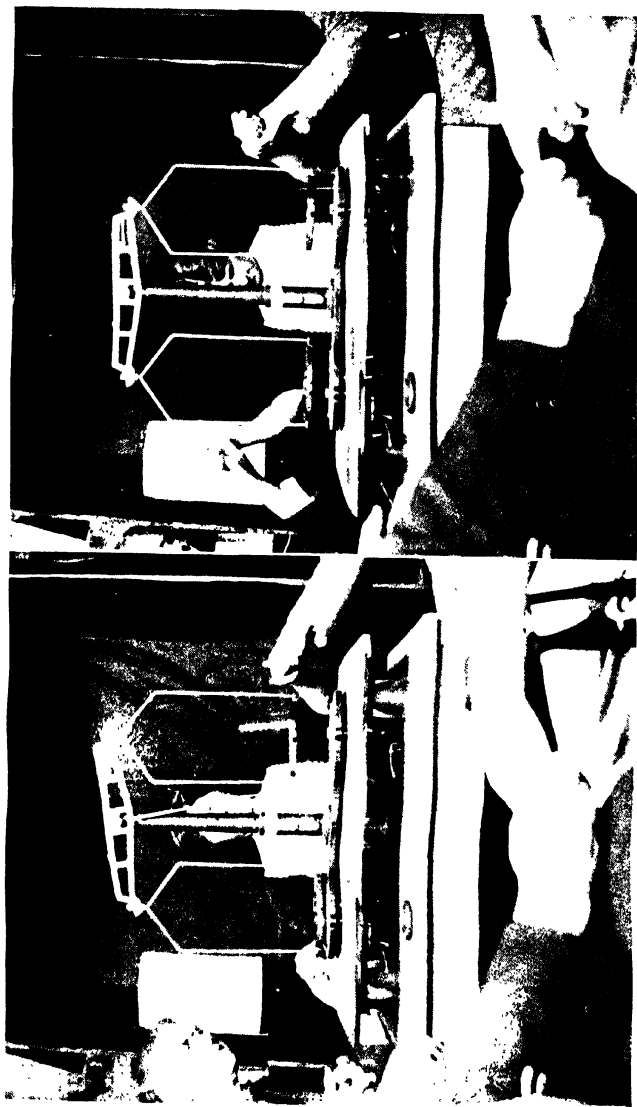
There was discussion with Walter on June 10 of the newly developed photographic aspects of the case. He was asked whether he could give any advice as between flashlights and the mercury-vapor lamp. He requested that two trial exposures be made with the latter, cutting the aperture down below what had been used in the unsuccessful experiments and letting the time run to thirty seconds or more. It will be appreciated, whatever one believes regarding the true status of the control, that when one can confer with him on matters like this and get advice of such technical character, one has progressed a very long distance beyond the banal "red Indian" control of the conventional mediumship, with his primitive ideas and his primitive vocabulary. Walter did not stop with advice about the lens and the time; he gave

instructions as to the location of the camera and the lamp, as well. He turned out to be a bad guesser, in that none of the pictures thus made showed anything extraneous; but that does not rob the incident of its dramatic character.

Talking at length on June 12, Walter said in effect that if the cylinders of June 8 had been taken under long exposure, they would have looked as though filled with cotton wool. The cylinder seen in the pan, he continued, is like the end of a billiard cue; the end has to be cut off and left behind; it cannot be redeemed, but is lost forever. In this connection he said that some night, when he was all ready to smash the cabinet, he would ask us, in red light, to take a slow photograph of its destruction. This would probably make the cabinet appear as though there was a snow-drift against it. We got this snow-drift picture ultimately, but in quite another connection (Chapter LI).

Conant, under Walter's instructions, took a pair of ultra-violet exposures of thirty seconds' duration on June 13; and again on the sixteenth, with an exposure of one minute. Both efforts were without psychic result. Walter, talking with Comstock about photography, expressed considerable ignorance of it but hopes of developing successful technique for showing his psychic structures. The flashlight, he said on the nineteenth, was objectionable in that it jarred too severely the forces which he had to use on the scales, and he wanted, even at the expense of temporary set-backs, to get the results with the other illumination. He got the set-backs, on this date as on the twenty-third.

From time to time the photographic apparatus was used during July and August. As the scales came to occupy a lesser position, Walter's objections to the flashlight seemed to decrease too; and this came to be the more usual way of taking pictures in the seance room. There was a long interval, however, before the next positive results in this direction; and when they came, they were of such nature as to go better in



THE PSYCHIC CYLINDERS OF JUNE 8, 1924

The mates of both these views show the cylinder, differing from these only in being taken from a slightly different angle. These two are selected from the seven prints mentioned on pages 362-3, because they show the cylinders best.

connection with the story of the apparatus with which Walter was working when they were made. I therefore defer them to that place.

Some forty years ago, Sidgwick, in a presidential address to the (British) Society for Psychical Research, described the way in which the impervious skeptic keeps always one jump ahead of the phenomena, by (page 346) revising his objections and his standard of proof as fast as old ones are met. Ultimately, if we press him, we drive this unreasoning objector to a point where, as his only escape from genuineness, he charges fraud against the investigator. When we get him to this place, Sidgwick thought that we might leave him, confident that we have done our duty by him. I close the present chapter here, with the observation that we are rapidly bringing *our* case to the point where the only escape from genuineness will be to damn all the investigators along with the medium; and where, therefore, the present citation from the literature is pertinent.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE LATER HISTORY OF THE PSYCHIC LIGHTS

AFTER a period of two months or more in which, as Chapter XXIV makes clear, psychic lights occurred seldom and feebly (on account of the concentration on the scales?), there was in late June a strong return to this phenomenon, but in altered form. The lights now appeared closely confined to the cabinet, usually so placed that one could believe them to be in actual contact with the medium. They moved little, but varied in brilliance more freely than in the past; their persistence at a given time and place was extraordinary. The first item comes from the record for June 22, when, the dictaphone tells us:

“Just after the red light was put out at the beginning of the sitting, a phosphorescent light was seen, apparently on the medium’s chest. It has remained for some time, and is still there. After about four minutes it is getting dimmer, and is now almost gone. Carrington says, after another minute, that it is getting brighter again; he thinks it shifted to the right. Mrs. Brown agrees with these observations. Comstock also saw the light. Carrington says it has returned to its original position.”

Walter’s voice was not heard at all on this occasion, the light being all that happened. The hasty critic who attacks the light on this ground does not realize that, by making the occurrence of other phenomena depend upon the presence of Walter’s spoken word, he is actually leaning toward the spirit hypothesis! The committee did not incline to regard the light as necessarily bad, on this or other grounds; but they did feel that its manner of appearance was unfortunate. Coming into

view instantly on the extinction of the red light, there was no reason why it could not have been a spot of luminous paint on Margery's gown. There is always in the house a supply of the zinc sulfide used for marking the seance apparatus. When active at all this is bright enough, on passing from light into dark, to be seen at once. The movement observed, it seemed probable, could have been produced by motion of the elbow and shoulder.

The results of June 23 pointed away from any such hypothesis. The light came not until some seconds had elapsed after the extinction of the red light. Carrington, Comstock and Conant all saw it. Comstock indicated that it was small, about the size of a plum. Margery's right arm and torso were usually between me and it, but twice I caught it in different positions. Conant, free to move, reported its visibility from almost anywhere in the room, at Margery's left. Carrington and Comstock likened its shape to that of a short pencil.

"It is now fifteen or twenty minutes since the red light was turned out," reads the record; "and the psychic light has been on almost continuously. It gets weak and strong by turns. Conant suggests that it varies from an intense small area to a dim large area," the idea being that the total energy output seemed substantially constant. "Carrington and Bird report an exceptionally strong light which started somewhere about the psychic's throat, went down several inches, and disappeared." The report stresses the fact that throughout the manifestation of the light, Margery's hands were held by Carrington and myself.

"The light is now on, and has been practically continuous from the beginning of the sitting. Carrington put his head in the cabinet about four inches from it, and it was moving through several inches. It looked like a cloudlike luminosity." He next reported it lower down. With F. H. at the telephone and me in his place, Carrington saw a light, apparently on

Margery's lap. I swung my hand holding hers about over this space, but was unable to find a position in which our united hands eclipsed the light from Carrington.

We got the same light on the twenty-fourth, with the same behavior. This time there was an interval, after our light went out and before Walter's came on, for him to come through and talk. I believe this ruled out all luminous paint; I know none that would not be instantly visible, if it were ever to become so, on turning off this preliminary red light. Moreover, Carrington and I had uninterrupted and unconfused control of Margery's two hands before, during and after the period covered by the psychic light. These early observations were checked by Comstock; and though attention was diverted to the violent destruction of the cabinet, lights were noted from time to time.

The same old light appeared on the twenty-fifth, this time about four seconds after we turned off the red lamp. In a minute and a half it dwindled almost to nothing; presently it waxed again. Carrington and Conant saw it; I left my post of control to go around and have a look. I resumed my place and it got dimmer. It had seemed to me to lie about in the normal position of a belt buckle. When it got bright it again resembled a pencil. It faded and returned at about the waist level, and continued thus to wax and wane with hands controlled. Between observations of its coincidence with the Victrola (Chapter XL), the following was dictated:

"Comstock has just returned from observing the light with Carrington. There is no question that it is there, and that it was changing from maximum to minimum brightness in a period which might average a minute. We moved the psychic's arm back and forth; the light did not change position. Our faces were apparently about a foot from the light, which changed its area from time to time."

The point of the arm experiment may not be clear to all. We were tightening up on conditions and using foot control

more freely than it had been used. Margery accordingly sat usually in stockinged feet, to make such control more certain and more comfortable. But when psychic lights occur under such terms, the accusation must be met that luminous paint has been daubed on the soles of the stockings, and displayed, from time to time, by sleight of foot, at moments when foot control is relaxed. The experiment just cited would have forced a guilty uplifted foot to move. Of course, luminous paint on Margery's stockings would have rubbed off in faint luminous spots on the floor; but a specific rather than a general defense is always best.

During the latter part of this sitting the psychic light was persistent, disappearing seldom, save when the Victrola halted. Its behavior is sufficiently described in the chapter already cited. On the twenty-sixth, one faint misty light was seen, and one small round one, dimming rapidly. Both were in the cabinet. Later this evening, Walter's cry for "control" was followed by the appearance of a light some distance above Comstock's head, toward the corner of the room. Carrington, Margery and Adler agreed that it swooped "like a comet"; other sitters saw it. On the twenty-seventh, the standing psychic light in the cabinet was visible most of the time, fading with the Victrola, and occasionally without it. On the twenty-eighth faint lights were recorded; on the twenty-ninth, none.

June 30 gave something new, in the form of a curved bar of very bright light, estimated as about four inches by one inch. It was seen at the north, east and south sides of the table, in or near the celluloid cover of the scales. It disappeared with a tortuous movement toward the floor; sometimes faster, sometimes slower. Comstock said it might be conceived as a swinging light passing in and out from a fourth dimension. Later it appeared on the floor at Margery's side, accompanied by movements of the megaphone. Again, on July 1, there were several displays of bright lights, approximately

one inch by three, dashing here and there about the table. On July 2 the return to comparative anatomical independence of Margery was more marked, many lights being seen in motion around the table, mostly at the east side.

These traveling lights continued to feature the sittings. On July 3 they were very plentiful, of various brilliance and size, moving near the balance and near the floor and seen by many sitters at once. On the fourth, with Keating and Carrington controlling at either side of Margery, lights came almost as high as the top of the cabinet and moved about freely, lasting only for a second or so. Carrington, standing in the cabinet, reports lights as high as his head, and in later conversation with me, in which he laid down numerous reservations against the signed records, verified this statement without reservation.

There were no lights on the fifth and but one on the sixth—a tiny yellow affair like a will-o'-the-wisp, seen by Keating far to his right, and lasting for about fifteen seconds. But on the seventh a series of interesting lights was seen, chiefly by Conant and Keating. They were mistlike and fleeting; some of them seemed inside the cover of the scales. One or two were described as crablike. Carrington saw but one. Keating tells me that mostly they could have been the stockinged foot, but that some were too sharp-edged for this.

Keating saw lights near the balance on July 8, during a conversation between F. H. and Walter, which F. H. records as through the megaphone. Carrington, however, saw no necessity for assuming that the megaphone effect was other than artificial (see page 295). On the ninth again, lights were seen, chiefly by Keating, in or near the scales cover. They varied from small bright spots to large, misty, cloudlike masses, and moved rapidly. For the tenth, lights are chronicled without description.

The sitting of July 11, in Comstock's apartment, gave rise to an incident about which much discussion has centered.

After about five minutes Carrington and Conant reported a light in the cabinet, similar to those of late June. It came and went repeatedly for five minutes. It was not round, but rather oblong, two or three inches long. Everybody in the room saw it sooner or later, though hand and foot control had been perfect from the start. Keating stated that for the first time in his experience the lights had a peculiar flicker.

The light was continuous for twenty minutes. Comstock left the dictaphone to visit the center of action, and found it glowing steadily about a foot and a half in front of Carrington's face, at Margery's left. Trying to touch it, he located it on top of her left shoulder. He repeatedly eclipsed it with his hand, finding it visible again on removal of the obstruction. He touched the luminous area freely without getting any luminosity rubbed off on his hand, contrary to experience with the zinc sulfide. Placing a black sock over the affected zone, he asked Walter to make the light come on top of this. Although the light continued to be seen, its frequency and brilliance decreased; and it did not come on top of the sock. The record leaves one in doubt whether it was seen through the sock or around its edges; and whether its continued visibility came only after a reported shift in position.

About here Walter said: "I wish you wouldn't experiment so much until I have worked up my power; it's hard enough without your smashing it all up." He also asked and was granted elimination of specific knee control while the feet were so rigorously controlled.

The lights were ultimately dropped by Walter, and forgotten to a large degree when all the sitters got quite excited about other things that happened. But Margery herself did not forget them; and after the sitting was over, she told Miss Wood that, while they were operative, Comstock had found the effect strongly suggestive of a luminous shoulder strap on her undergarment. So she asked Miss Wood, who

had examined her person and clothing in the light before the sitting, to do it again in the dark, with reference to this suggestion. They found the left shoulder strap to be distinctly luminous; and there was a point of lesser, though distinct, brightness on her chest. Carrington, called into the dark room to make observations, found luminous patches on the right shoulder, also, which failed while he looked at them and were not seen again. But those on the left persisted. The entire group now gathered in the seance room, in darkness; and while they looked at the luminous shoulder-strap a sudden variation in its intensity was noted. One after another they all took the strap in their fingers, and, while they could rub off no luminosity on their own hands, the strap was brightly radiant. Carrington and Miss Wood said that the lights which they had seen in the other room were brighter and more widely dispersed than those now observed.

So much would apparently be consistent with the theory of use of a luminous paint of different character from the zinc sulfide, such that it would not rub off on contact. Whether such a paint exists outside the radium preparations that are recognizable from their color I do not know. Just how the light could be made to appear during the early part of the seance, go away till the end, and then return, I do not know, unless it were at a point much more easily covered over than the top of the shoulder. Nor do I know any conceivable reason why a fraudulent operator, about to get away with it, should herself have called for examination. But these things might be explained away, were it not for the next and concluding part of the incident. Above I have largely quoted Comstock's dictaphone record; below I quote it directly:

"While we were still examining the luminous shoulder-strap in the dark in the seance room, and several of us were standing closely about the psychic, handling the strap and feeling other bright spots on her skin, we suddenly heard a whispered voice, practically in our faces, which was not the

voice of any of the observers and which had the characteristics of Walter's usual enunciation. This was followed within a minute by another such whisper. The first whisper we thought said, 'Good night,' the second might have been a laugh. At approximately the same time the light of the shoulder strap *faded out and was not seen thereafter*, except for one minute luminous point which seemed more persistent than the rest."

I have tried to get Carrington and Keating to commit themselves to genuineness or fraud here, and neither will do it. It looks to me as though both thought it probably genuine, but so far from absolute proof that they were unwilling to say so. If either of them had any degree of confidence that it was fraud, he would certainly not hesitate to say so, speaking privately to me, with assurance that he would not be quoted against his wishes.

For myself: If somebody will mix me a luminous paint, which will go out as sharply as the record indicates this light to have gone out, and which will follow a schedule of fading out and fading in again that I will write after the paint is in my hands—then I will consider the possibility that this performance was a fake. If these terms are objected to on the ground that Margery can time her own seances, I must dissent. The presence of Comstock at the dictaphone, and of painstaking investigators like him and Carrington in the room, makes this impossible. If she knew exactly when she was to arrive in the seance room, she couldn't come within half an hour of timing the start of the sitting, let alone its end.

From time to time after this, psychic lights were seen; but with no connected history, and not on a scale that necessitates my violation of the climax to which we have come. I shall therefore take pains not to violate it.

CHAPTER XLV

SMALL STUFF UNDER LARGE CONTROL

THE rather formidable word, "telekinesis," signifying movement from a distance, has been coined for application to the numerous seance-room effects of which it is descriptive; and Margery's mediumship will be recognized as largely a telekinetic one. Outside the lights and the voices, practically everything we get with her may be thus classified. We get telekinesis from things like the scales and the bell apparatus introduced to Walter for that specific purpose. We get it from cabinet and table, present as part of the seance-room furniture. And we get it from the many small implements in the room, some of which are there for this purpose and some for specific other purposes. But whatever their immediate purpose, it is clear that these small objects present a temptation toward telekinesis. Indeed, it might be inferred that their use for other purposes involves their telekinetic manipulation. Thus, if we place the megaphone on the table or the floor, for Walter to use in speech, he will presumably have to pick it up as a prerequisite for such use; and this is telekinesis.

The megaphone was first put before Walter on March 27, 1924, and as early as March 29 he discovered that it was good for other things than merely being talked through. On this date he tapped the head of each sitter with it, in turn. The fact that heads are far from fixed, that they bob around sideways to some extent and that they have a wide forward-and-backward range as one sits up or slumps back in one's chair, makes of particular pertinence here my customary remark about accuracy of manipulation. The tapping of all heads with the megaphone was repeated on March 30.

Control of the psychic throughout the sitting was announced by F. H. and Richardson on April 1. Various sitters were touched by the megaphone, and Miss Richardson saw its mass pass back and forth, eclipsing the illuminated end of the curtain pole as this lay on the table. Later, with Goodall inside the cabinet beside Margery, the megaphone scratched his head at the precise spot which he himself had just been scratching. At the end it was found on his head, like a dunce cap.

The range of these manifestations was increased on April 6, when all six sitters were tapped by the megaphone, and five of them crowned with the dunce cap. Again, on the ninth, the megaphone was very lively all around the circle, while Goodall held both Margery's hands and Mrs. Litzelmann both of F. H.'s. For the eleventh, "frequent touches by the megaphone, affecting all four sitters," are recorded. On the following night, what was unmistakably the megaphone touched me in the face at a moment when no exception could possibly be made to the control of Margery's hands and feet by McDougall and myself. F. H. and Richardson were crowned on the fifteenth, there was megaphone work of undetailed character on the seventeenth, Goodall and Golding were rapped on the twenty-first. At the committee sitting of April 26, we heard what we interpreted with confidence as the dragging of the megaphone over the table.

The megaphone persisted in falling from the table into Margery's lap on May 12, and once it did this under the very best control of Margery by Carrington and myself. It often touched Carrington, F. H. and me, nearest the psychic; less often Goodall and Mrs. Bird. Also on this date a crude ukulele, which had been almost totally ignored by Walter, though in the seance room for many months, was lifted from the table top and used to touch five different sitters. At a moment when I had both Margery's hands, the table got a fearful blow from this.

There was some use of the megaphone on the thirteenth, above Margery's head, after Prince and I had had constant control of her hands from the start. And the ukulele again provided a lengthy act here. It was on the lower shelf of the table at the start. It was kicked off and kicked about the floor; and notes were struck singly on its strings. An attempt was made to bring it to the table top; there was much labor and noise, several times it crashed back to the floor, but finally success was gained. Later it was taken off the table and put in Prince's lap, and from here it was nestled against his chest and left arm in such fashion as to bring from him the remark that he had a psychic baby. Before attempting to appraise this incident the reader should turn to Chapter L, where Prince's contact with the mediumship is discussed as a phenomenon in itself; and to Chapter LIV.

Prince and Comstock were in control of Margery on the fifteenth, when F. H. and Prince were touched in the face with the megaphone; and it was used, at Prince's request, to rap on the table and on his hand. Next night, the entire lower shelf went to the floor with the ukulele, so that we were puzzled to know just what had happened until we saw in red light.

There arose at this point a very curious episode, which seems better included here than anywhere else, though it has suggestions, if genuine, of being connected with the Great Victrola Mystery. It originated on May 16. Walter had said, "Turn out the red light and sit awhile. You may talk and have a good time. If I want the light put out, I'll put it out." After we had sat in the red light for twelve minutes, with nothing happening of any description, the light was put out to consult him. He said: "That side light may be too bright; try the ceiling light instead." So the mantel lamp, which is the one habitually used for red light effects, was put out; and by use of the wall switch beside the door, the very faint red lamp on the ceiling was brought into play. We

sat so for about ten minutes; and on repeating the experiment of going into darkness to consult Walter, we were told, instantaneously: "Turn on that light, you damned fools."

This we did; and then, after about five minutes more, it suddenly went out of itself, with no noise of a switch or of anything else. There ensued some four minutes of total darkness, after which it came on again. The full-strength illumination was preceded by three flickers, but no sound.

At first it was imagined that the continuous operation of the Victrola through this dark interval was sufficient guarantee that the action of the lamp did not center about the fuse-box in the cellar. Subsequent investigation proved this not to be the case. The lamp-stand on which are connected the mantel light, the Victrola and the dictaphone takes its current from the fuse that supplies all the other connections on this floor; but the ceiling light, for some unaccountable reason, is on the circuit with the second floor. No evidence was found when we inspected the fuses that one had recently been pulled, but there was no certainty that one had not. The absence of flicker on all but one of eight makings and breakings of the circuit, however, would suggest that a simpler contact than a screw was involved.

After about sixteen minutes the phenomenon was repeated, the darkness lasting forty-four seconds by my count; there was neither sound nor flicker as the light went off and on. Walter said he did it by squeezing the wires. The next night he revised this and claimed to have unscrewed the bulb in its socket. "They'll say somebody unscrewed the plug in the cellar. I was going to try to swing that chandelier rock-a-bye-baby. That light has nothing to do with you people, anyway. Have you any idea what I am discovering? Well—I was going to tell you, but I won't."

Next night the phenomenon was repeated. During the first restoration of the light, the second extinction and the second restoration, I stood with my hand cupped over the

wall switch, eliminating at least this possible source of fraud. If the thing had continued a few nights longer we should have been able to make considerable further progress with it; but Walter made good on his implication that it was not a phenomenon in itself and not done for our benefit—it never happened again. So various hypotheses of fraud remain wide open—and then again, it could perfectly well have been genuine.

On May 19, and for several days following, there was a curious display which Walter dubbed his jazz band. He would play on the ukulele strings, in a fashion which the sitters could duplicate only with their fingers and which was therefore in some degree evidential without foot control; at the same time he would whistle merrily; and a "bass-drum" accompaniment would be rendered to all this on the sides of the cabinet. With a wholly friendly circle on May 20, this was repeated; and after Walter had dropped the ukulele on the floor, John tried, with only partial success, to restore it to the table. There was also a little manipulation of the megaphone, which was placed on Richardson's head, falling thence outside the circle and remaining where it fell.

Concentration on the scales cut down heavily on other phenomena for the next few weeks, and we find nothing further within the scope of this chapter until late June, when, for a few nights, Walter pursued a prankish mood. It started on June 28, with a terrific crash in the northeast corner of the room, very remote, in terms of Margery's usual range, from any sitter. Investigation showed that from the mantel corner there had fallen or been pushed a twelve-pound brass candlestick, carrying a candle. It landed on the upholstered back of the sofa, the candle going to the floor behind. The holder must have somersaulted; its base was away from the mantel and its top toward it. An electric light bulb, which should have been on the mantel, in a position from which the fall of the candlestick would not have disturbed it, was found

on the couch, uninjured. There was, of course, no certainty whether it had gone with the stick or not. Examination of the mantel showed a track in the dust where the candlestick had been dragged to the edge, and a nick in the wood where it went over. Miss Scott was present (see page 57) for the first time in weeks; and while the scene of the wreck was eight feet from Margery, it was hardly more than five feet from her.

On the next night, glass was heard falling on the floor. Walter spoke up to assure the sitters that it *was* glass but not one of the sort under the scales; that it was, in fact, a light bulb. John, he said, had thrown it to the floor, hoping it would burst; it hadn't done so, and the sitters expressed their sympathy for John's disappointment. "He feels worse about it than you do," acknowledged Walter. The red light was then turned on and the bulb, which should have been on the mantel at the beginning, was found on the floor.

Nothing had been heard on June 30, when Walter announced that John had just thrown another "bull pup." Walter said that it would be found near the cabinet, which had three minutes earlier been restored after being thrown flat on its back. In putting it in order, Conant had to pin the top curtains back in position. The search for the "bull pup" failed until Margery shook these curtains, when the same old spare bulb fell out on the floor. There should be a high degree of improbability that the lamp could have been there throughout the rough handling and restoration to which the curtains had just been subjected.

The end of this business came on July 4, when Walter and John finally succeeded in smashing not one, but two bulbs. Carrington's record does not indicate where this happened, contenting itself with the statement that there was no knowledge of their position at the start of the sitting.

While all this was going on, there was being introduced a novel manipulation of the megaphone, which soon became

quite standard. There had been movement of the megaphone on June 30; and on July 1, it was in some way inferred to be in the air, at a moment when the Victrola stopped. F. H. said that he would need red light; whereupon it clattered into Margery's lap, and thence to the floor. After this, for some days, the megaphone was under the observation of Carrington and Keating.

For July 6, Carrington writes: "Toward the close of the sitting, two whispered 'Hellos' were heard from the megaphone, which immediately was heard to drop to the floor. At this moment Keating assumed control, which, however, had not been continuous." For the eighth, the record was made by F. H., and reads: "Walter lifted the megaphone from Margery's right, carried it over to the left and above her head, and talked to Carrington and Keating. Keating noticed lights near the balance during this conversation. The megaphone was then thrown violently to the floor at Margery's left. With Walter's permission it was put back at her right; later he talked through it again, to her left and above her head. For the balance of the paragraph the scribe is Carrington. On the ninth, "The megaphone was lifted and talked through, then thrown into the air, landing on Carrington's chest. Then it fell to the floor at Keating's feet and remained there till the end." For the tenth: "The megaphone was lifted and talked through, then dropped, by request, at the medium's left. For the twelfth: "*At this point* Keating established control of Margery's right hand and both F. H.'s hands and knees. The megaphone *was then heard to scrape along the floor* and Walter's whistle was heard through it. *It was again dropped to the floor*, and again replaced [probably by the sitters] at Margery's right. *It was again lifted* and talked through, then thrown so as to fall in front of Carrington. *For a third time it was lifted* and spoken through, then dropped at Carrington's side. Meanwhile Carrington explored the psychic's lap, with his hand that held her left hand."

The general idea is clear: the megaphone is apparently talked through, then thrown down; sometimes its position immediately before the talking is believed to have been known, sometimes not. Carrington and Keating of course felt that seldom, if ever, could one be absolutely certain that the voice really came through the megaphone. They also felt it to be unfortunate that all the megaphone performances of this period came immediately after the red light was put out, either at the beginning of the seance or later on. The theory covering their fraudulent production would be that in the interval after F. H. had turned out the light and before he had recaptured her hand, Margery got possession of the megaphone and placed it on her lap, her shoulder or her head. That she then talked a bit in her natural voice, disguised to simulate the megaphone effect; after which she could pitch the megaphone overboard. The fact that the megaphone apparently had to be on the floor at Margery's right, between her and F. H., rather than at her other side, to bring on this phenomenon, would have to be pretty strongly met by other direct evidence of genuineness.

Now when I am in control of the link between F. H. and Margery, I do not permit the continuity of my control over her hand to be affected by anything he does with his. If he removes his for manipulation of the lights or for any other reason, I retain hers. To this extent, the theory outlined is predicated upon negligence by one of the investigators. Nevertheless, Carrington and Keating both told me privately that they did not consider that this theory had as yet been met. I think they must have forgotten the sitting of the twelfth, as italicized above.

Further, in the light of this theory, I did a little experimenting when next I was in Boston. With the megaphone on the floor at my right, I found that it would take me a very long time—at least five seconds, and usually considerably more—to possess myself of it in the dark, bring it up in such a

way as to assure that it did not strike any thing or any person, put it on my shoulder, and have my hand back in an innocent position. I found that I could not balance it on my shoulder with any large degree of assurance that it would stay there. If we had no specific incidents contradicting this theory, I should regard it as a highly improbable one; and we have one such incident, with more to come.

The Margery mediumship had gone along, so far, without the aid of the conventional tambourine, but on July 14 this instrument was introduced. Walter was told that it was beside the megaphone, and promptly denied this; he was right—the megaphone was already gone. "Whereupon," says F. H., "he laughed through it and for twenty minutes talked through it while it was obviously in the air above Margery's head; then he threw it on the floor at a place designated." The record does not specify, but the probabilities are that this twenty-minute stretch of talk was uninterrupted by any red light, and that in this event the hand control of Margery was similarly uninterrupted. It would tax her to balance the megaphone on her head or shoulder for that period, and if she had it in her lap she was subject to constant risk of exposure.

Presently the tambourine was lifted into the air, above the scales, practically in the center of the circle; its position could be so accurately diagnosed because it carried a spot of luminous paint. It was beaten and shaken about, right merrily, to the accompaniment of Walter's whistle and laughter. It was then dropped to the floor, placed in the laps of both Richardsons, taken away and put on Conant's head as a hat, and all manner of further antics played with it, all the while Margery and F. H. being under full control by Conant and the Richardsons.

The tambourine and the megaphone were used on July 15, simultaneously with one another and with other manifestations; this incident is described in Chapter XLVII. On the sixteenth, with Margery's hands firmly held by Adler and

F. H., Walter picked a harmonica off the table, blew on it twice, then threw it to the floor behind Margery. On the nineteenth the tambourine rang in mid-air but the record vouchsafes no details. The twentieth saw a remarkable exhibition of these small telekinetic phenomena.

The ukulele was picked up and put in turn in the laps of Adler, F. H. and Stewart. Then the tambourine and harmonica were piled with the megaphone in Stewart's lap and the ukulele tucked away under his arm. The tambourine was taken from him and held aloft two or three feet above the heads of the sitters, shaking freely here while other phenomena were going on elsewhere. The megaphone was thrown at Cross, landing upright between his knees; then it was several times hurled at Carrel, outside the circle, until finally it landed on his head. Cross, of course, was on the remote side of the circle from Margery; Carrel was as far or farther; they two were the farthest of any sitters.

The megaphone having been spilled off Carrel's head, F. H. offered to pick it up; Walter said no, he still had hold of it. He promptly picked it up and put it in Stewart's lap. Then he whistled through the megaphone, laughed, rang the bell-box (Chapter XLVII) and shook the tambourine, all at once. At the end, Carrel's distance from the psychic was found to be seven feet. Mrs. Stewart's presence here makes in order a reference to page 59.

Megaphone manifestations of July 22 went a long way to meet the theory of fraud. At the beginning, the megaphone was on the floor at Margery's right and behind her. I saw it in this position as F. H. reached to put out the light with his right hand, on his side away from Margery. Conant had established control of the junction between them; there was no occasion for breaking this junction or the control thereof, and neither was broken. Almost at once we got a whisper, which I took to be certainly through the megaphone; this was repeated several times. Then Margery and I swept our

united hands through the space in front of her. We touched nothing, but the megaphone fell to the floor behind her.

Sitting on July 23, with Houdini at Margery's left and I on the junction at her right, we got the usual megaphone performance. On July 24 we sat at Comstock's apartment. Three times during the seance, with all hand and foot controls specifically O. K.'d by Houdini and myself in view of the fact that something had just happened, the megaphone moved on the floor. As a matter of fact, it was on my side, and well out of reach of her foot. The details of these two evenings will be found in Chapter XLVIII.

With only friends present, the megaphone business was again well checked up on July 28. Walter talked through the megaphone and threw it in the laps of various sitters. Brown did not have continuous control of the link between Margery and F. H., but at some part of each episode, while things were "obviously still in the air" he verified it; and Murray, whose integrity cannot be questioned, was on Margery's other side. The tambourine was twice lifted from the floor under the table to a point high in air above the table, played on merrily the while, then thrown into various laps, alone or in combination with the megaphone. Again, on the thirtieth, these two instruments figured in a similar performance under announced control on both sides by the Richardsons, Mrs. Richardson leaning across F. H. to play her part here.

The megaphone, tambourine, etc., clearly marked with initials M. T. and so forth, in luminous paint, continued throughout August, as they had during July, to furnish entertainment for Walter and his sitters; but of these sittings I take account in a somewhat different fashion. The present chapter may therefore come to a close here. Out of deference to Prince I will not cite the incidents of May 13 or 15; but, passing these over, we still have those of July 14, 20 and 28, if we may cite authority other than that of my committeemen; and those of July 12, 22, 23 and 24, if we are to be thus

confined. All of these are reported in such clean-cut, positive fashion that they can hardly be thrown out on the ground that the sitters charged with control were mistaken—the irreconcilable skeptic is again in the position of laying the phenomena to actual fraud on the part of the investigators. We shall leave him there, as we have left him once before and as we shall do once again.

CHAPTER XLVI

RE-ENTER THE WRECKING CREW

THE cabinet destruction of June 24, when I was buried in the wreckage, was the climax for that sort of thing. Starting June 29, however, there appeared a new technique of tilting the cabinet over backwards, which Walter pursued relentlessly for some weeks. It proceeded on this occasion with considerable commotion of the cabinet, accompanied by a swinging in of both wings—not about the rigid corners, but about the hinged junction down the center of the back. There is no indication of just how far back the cabinet went, but the surrounding circumstances were excellent; for “at the actual moment of tilting, Conant had given up control to wind the Victrola, but the cabinet was out of reach of F. H., and Carrington had the psychic’s left arm and *both her feet*.” All this was greatly elaborated upon the following night. I quote F. H.’s report, which Carrington verifies orally in every detail:

“With little warning the cabinet began to shake and move; and when it started apparently to tilt backwards, Comstock suggested to Walter that it would be as well if he were to take a position in the doorway, which he did. Conant then entered the circle and controlled Margery’s right hand, F. H.’s left hand and left foot; Carrington had *both Margery’s feet*, as well as her left hand. Conant’s control of the arm included elbow, forearm and hand, and was broken only when he had to get up to restart the Victrola. In such intervals nothing happened.

“The cabinet tipped backwards against the doorway, and was then shaken as a rat by a cat, violently and convulsively.

Comstock seemed extraordinarily impressed with the nearness of the physical force.

"The cabinet was slowly shaken and pushed downward toward the horizontal, the upper end running downwards along the doorway. The lower edge of the back necessarily slid forward [the effect being like that of a ladder sliding down the side of a house]. When this edge came in contact with the back of Margery's chair, at the bottom of the legs, the chair began to move forward; but in advance of this, the table with the scales had been carefully moved about three feet northward, by Walter, to avoid injury. Then the lower edge of the back of the cabinet, the chair, and Margery, all moved northward as a unit until her legs were jammed under the chair. At the final crash of the cabinet to the floor, Carrington was in contact with her entire left side, including the head, and had, of course, the control of both legs and the left arm. In red light, the cabinet was found flat on its back, as anticipated.

"The control during this sitting was so perfect, and the simplicity and magnitude of the phenomena so clean-cut and obvious, that Comstock felt obliged to dictate that these manifestations could not have been done by Margery, that there was no evidence of an accomplice within the room, and that certainly none came from without." Carrington, too, found this incident one of the most impressive that he had ever experienced.

Conant was sent around the cabinet on a sort of scouting expedition on July 2, and after his return it was tipped backward against the doorway. Later, by way of variety, instead of being slid down upon its back, it was tilted forward again with a bang. There was perfect control on both sides of Margery, says the record.

For July 4, F. H.'s record reads: "The cabinet was moved, especially the west wing, with control reported perfect. It was then tilted back against the rear wall; replaced; tilted

back again. Walter said 'Good night,' but we reformed the circle and went on, in hopes that some other control might manifest. The cabinet was then moved about with considerable force, the screws falling to the floor and the wood creaking under the strain. It was finally pushed clear over, so that the back rested on the floor, with the two wings in air. Perfect control reported on both sides, by the immediate controllers and also by Carrington and Keating on the links."

This record does not carry the signatures of Carrington and Keating, as do most of those of this ten-day period. And in conversation with me, they indicate that the performance did not impress them as clean-cut and fraud-proof. The falling of the screws, of course, can be regarded as meaningless in the absence of any preliminary examination to verify their condition. But more serious than that is the statement made by Carrington and Keating that the episodes of strong action here all came after lapses in control for purposes of adjusting the Victrola or answering the telephone. The theory of fraud covering the case would be that Margery used a hand to get a foot under the cabinet, and then used the foot to produce the phenomena. On this date, then, one could have no real assurance that the whole performance was not engineered in this way.

Such reservations, as my italics will have shown, do not apply to the incidents of June 29 and 30; nor do they apply to the next cabinet episode, of July 7. The record which I quote is signed by Carrington and he tells me privately that there is nothing to say in modification of the typewritten word:

"F. H. had been out to telephone. Movements of the cabinet followed his return, under excellent conditions of control. Margery's right was controlled by F. H. and Conant, her left hand and both knees by Carrington, his arm across the knees as he held her hand. Under these conditions [which of course utterly bar any violent work by either of her feet] the cabinet tilted backward against the rear wall, and was

then still further pushed over, so that the back rested on the floor with wings in air. We could hear the straining of the cabinet as it was shaken in being pushed over. We set it upright; it was again tilted over and again pushed on the floor. Just before the cabinet work began Walter called for control, as he said he was going to push over the cabinet. No perceptible movement of Margery's hands and feet was felt during the cabinet manifestations." If one were to look for confederates, F. H. would be the only one of Margery's friends within reach of the cabinet, and Conant's position of control would effectively cut him off from it.

It happened again on July 8, under conditions which, in Carrington's judgment, were not quite so completely contradictory to the idea of fraud. Walter called for control, and the cabinet creaked. At this Comstock left the dictaphone and took his position first inside the curtain in the doorway, later outside. Conant was on the link between Margery and F. H.; Carrington in the circle at the other side. Comstock was hardly in his new place when the cabinet tipped backwards, slid down along the doorway, and forced Margery in her chair about two feet forward; then it fell on its back on the floor, with a crash. The weakness would appear to lie in the failure to particularize about the control. Indeed, I believe that he regarded the June 30 and July 7 demonstrations as the only ones of this series that were intrinsically valid. But when a critic is as severe as he is, he cannot be charged with any tendency to make a valid incident out of an invalid one; and when none of the invalid episodes involve any suggestion of actual detection in fraud, *one* valid one is all we need.

Carrington's record for July 10 reads: "The cabinet was moved about several times, the sides being closed together, evidently by pressure on the back. But it was not tipped over, nor pushed about as violently as before. The cloth lining was ripped off, and thumb tacks were heard to fall to the floor. During the cabinet movements Carrington had both

Margery's feet and legs between his knees and feet, and her left hand fell across his knees; F. H. and Conant had her right hand and arm." It would appear that there is no ground for reservation here, either. F. H. adds the interesting statement that thumb tack was distinctly thrown at Keating, through the space under the table.

Sitting in Comstock's apartment on July 11, a cabinet was improvised by using the corner of the room for two sides and a three-way screen for the third. A canopy was fastened to the wall and the top of the screen by thumb tacks, and helped to hold the screen in place. After nearly two hours of other phenomena, Walter turned his attention to this cabinet. Thumb tacks commenced falling and breezes were reported. Conant and Carrington reported perfect control of both hands and both feet; and, of course, the situation, with respect to the possible entry of a confederate from outside, simply did not exist. The cabinet continued creaking and straining violently, and the control was verified; this time the recorded statement covers F. H. as well as Margery. Shortly after the most vigorous cabinet motion, Walter said "Good night," and red light was had to examine the controls, which every one stated to have remained unchanged in every detail. These were found all in order. The improvised cabinet, which had been more or less symmetrically behind the left-hand corner of Margery's chair, and perhaps one and one-half feet distant therefrom, had collapsed forward, leaning against the upper left-hand corner of the chair at an angle of perhaps forty-degrees with the vertical. The improvised cloth top of course was all pulled down; the final position of the cabinet does not indicate a motion which of itself would bring down the cloth top. The cabinet must have moved away from the wall, before it fell over against the wall to its final position.

The control as revealed by the onset of the light is described in detail. Margery sat in her chair, Conant having the link between her and F. H. in his right hand, and her right

elbow in his left. Her right foot was against his left foot on the floor, F. H.'s left foot and knee in contact with his right leg. Carrington had Margery's left hand, and controlled her left foot and leg with his left. He had her hand firmly in his grasp, the thumb turned so that he could locate it (and thus identify it as a left). Keating had F. H.'s right hand and foot securely. And there you are; that seems to be all there is to it.

Several succeeding cabinet episodes I omit because they add nothing to what we have had. Then we come to July 23 and 24, for which dates the sittings must be considered as a whole, in Chapter XLVIII. Since these two occasions there have been a few cabinet manifestations, but nothing requiring description; so I leave the subject here.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE BELL-BOX COMES INTO ITS OWN

CHAPTER XXXVI closed with the suggestion that the telegraph-bell outfit, with which Walter had given several very impressive demonstrations, was on its way to innocuous desuetude. After it had been idle for two weeks or so, I tried my hand at modifying it in such fashion as to provoke its use. I worked along the lines of giving a larger contact surface. I builded better than I knew, making an apparatus that ultimately has given the most impressive of all demonstrations that have been got through Margery's mediumship.

Two eight-inch-square boards were hinged together along one edge of each. A spiral spring was firmly mounted between them to hold them apart; and at corresponding points on their inside surfaces, metal plates were fastened. When these plates were appropriately wired up and the outfit was substituted for the telegraph in the existing bell assembly, if the boards were pressed together against the resistance of the spring until the plates met, the current would flow and the bell would ring.

For May 14, this device was wired to a red lamp instead of a bell. The lamp gave one faint and fleeting glimmer during the seance, under circumstances suggesting the accidental, normal closing of the contact. This experience suggested modifications in the spring and in the contact; and when these had been made, the contact boards were substituted for the telegraph in the bell outfit.

Commenting upon the candy box in which the telegraph had once been put before him, and on other schemes that had been broached from time to time for enclosing this

apparatus, Walter himself, on May 14, had suggested that the new contact device be put in a cheesecloth cage. It was this cage that was put together under conditions so displeasing to Walter, as mentioned on page 336. Instead of the small, simple housing which the words "cheesecloth cage" implied in my mind, an enormous wooden framework was brought in. The racket while the cheesecloth was nailed to this was really appalling; Walter absolutely refused to have anything to do with the contact boards so long as they were kept in that "bird cage." The refusal was not an explicit one—but it turned out to be none the less definite.

One of Walter's most reiterated comments is that he must use the apparatus we give him. This was beautifully exemplified in the history of the contact apparatus. It lay so long in its cheesecloth cage that most of us, I imagine, took it to be a dead issue. But in the search for apparatus that might conveniently be transported to Comstock's house for the sitting of July 11, it was resurrected, freed of its shroud, and placed on the table in a wooden box, with the contact boards screwed in place on top of this. The bell rang, at a moment when all controls were believed to be perfect. Red light was at once turned on, and the belief found to be in accord with the facts.

In order to get the contact device farther from possible reach of F. H.'s head, it was placed on Carrington's end of the table. A long series of table manipulations ensued, which are not sufficiently interesting for detailing in full from the record, although complete hand and foot control of Margery and F. H. made them distinctly evidential. The upshot was to spill the bell-box off into Carrington's lap, while "the table moved into such a position that it rested on top of the contact board on top of the box. Carrington held the box there on his knees, the table leaning on the contact board on the top." The record shows that this rearrangement took up thirty-five minutes. The above description of the result was dictated by Comstock to Miss Wood immediately after the sitting, in the presence

of and with the approval of Carrington, Keating, Conant, Margery and F. H. It goes on to specify that "in this way the table and the contact board together may be said to have formed one piece of apparatus consisting of a large area which, by its movements, would make contact and ring the bell." From this point I give in full this statement, of which the dictaphone record says: "There followed a long series of bell-ringing manifestations, which will be recorded immediately after the sitting." The reason for this unusual procedure was the desire of Comstock to observe more closely than he could do with the dictaphone on his mind. Proceeding with the post-seance record, we find:

"Experiment showed that by Carrington's moving his knees upwards and thus pressing the contact board against the under side of the table it was possible to achieve only intermittent contact and he could not produce a continuous ringing. On the other hand, when inspecting it in red light we found that with this improvised duplex mechanism a pressure practically anywhere on the top of the table would ring the bell.

"The bell was rung repeatedly in the dark and also in red light of sufficient brightness so that those present, the table, the contact boards, and the controls were all clearly visible.

"In the dark when the contact board was being depressed, Carrington frequently raised Dr. Richardson's hand to his head, thus giving a double check to the fact that he was nowhere near the contact board himself.

"Before by practice Walter reached the place where he could ring the bell intentionally in the light, we noticed, when Comstock turned the lights on and off intermittently at various times, that the bell-ringing in the dark stopped ringing, generally speaking, as soon as the light was turned on. It did not always stop the exact instant the light was turned on, but there was a marked and quite perfect correlation between the periods of light and the periods of silence of the bell.

"This is a very interesting correlation, but it must not

be forgotten, as stated above, that subsequent to this we got a lot of ringing in the red light, both continuous long ringing and a number of short rings, in response to requests.

"There was a lot of signaling of one form and another in the dark. In one case the telegraph code was used to spell out 'C-o-m-s-t-o-c-k' and Walter named each letter as he gave it by rings. Dr. Richardson asked for the Richardson family signal ["Down in the Coal Bin Shoveling Smoke," page 230], which Walter rang to his satisfaction. He also gave in the red light the long, short and long by request.

"During quite a lot of the ringing phenomena in the dark, the psychic was asked to count aloud, and did so. This enabled us to locate her head in a very definite way.

"Another fact of considerable interest should be recorded. In the position in which the table was originally found leaning on the contact boards the whole position looked somewhat uncertain and cramped, particularly was Carrington inconvenienced and under some strain to hold the box in his lap. We took the liberty of rearranging the box, leaving the essential features of the mechanism, as we believed, unchanged; that is, the table still at one side of it, supported on the contact boards, but the box with supporting boards was now placed securely in Carrington's lap so that he could support it without effort. This happened about half way through the ringing phenomena, and the ringing continued.

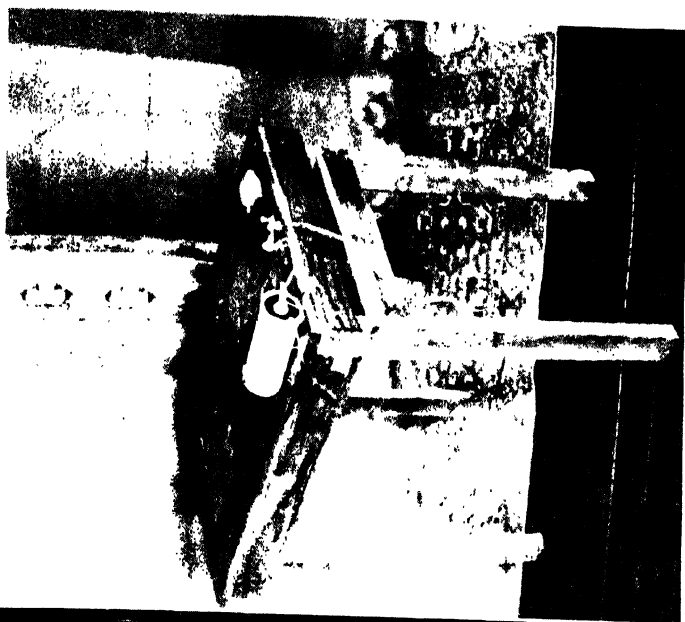
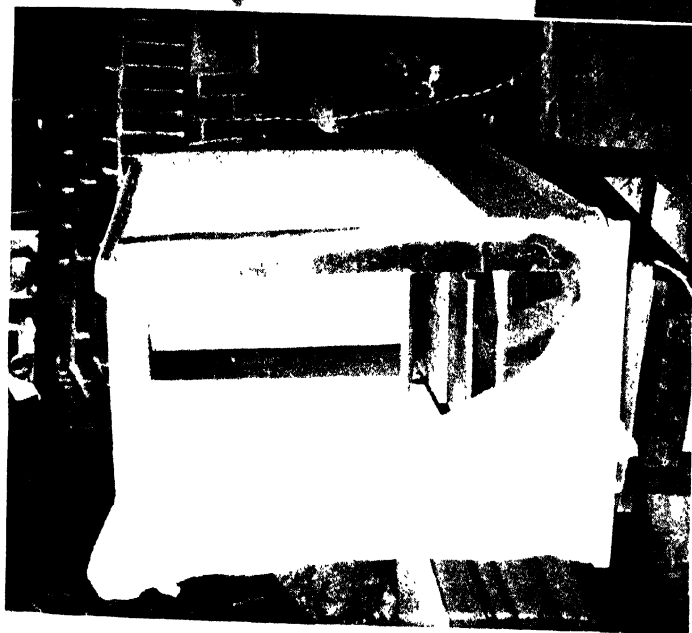
"Comstock asked the question of Walter whether the relative ease with which he seemed to move the table, even in the light, was primarily due to its having a large, flat surface (the table top) or that it had appendages, namely the legs, which went clear to the floor. To this Walter answered with a sentence which we could not completely interpret, but containing the word 'surface.' We inferred, and we think rightly, that it was the large surface and not the legs which helped him. Between the foregoing question and Walter's answer the greatest levitation of the table of the evening

occurred. The table was first tilted away from Carrington and then seemed lifted up and thrown forward on to the contact board, which was in his lap, and so far up the contact board that the weight of the table caused the bell to ring continuously. Keating, who was following the movements of the table by frequent contacts with his face, says that this levitation must have been at least a foot in height, and F. H. confirms this by saying that at the time of the above-mentioned levitation the table hit him under the chin."

One who was not present at this demonstration would perhaps find it a trifle less demonstrative than one who was there. All the sitters were satisfied that there was no unconscious coöperation by Carrington in the bell ringing; and they were satisfied, experimentally, that the ringing which he could thus induce was quite different in character from that which was obtained. Regarding the episode as genuine, its rationale would be straightforward enough, and in line with the suggestion of the quotation. F. H., in his own mind, has a very definite classification of all telekinetic phenomena into "gross" and "fine" groups, the former of which are done easily and effectively, the latter with more difficulty and less finish.

This brilliant return to the contact apparatus was, of course, pursued. The box in which the bell and batteries had been during the sitting at Comstock's was made permanent, a lock being provided to insure against tampering and the wires being brought neatly out through small holes for attachment to the contacts. The key was lost; so that when ultimately it became necessary to renew the batteries the lock had to be pried off. The contact boards were screwed solidly down to the top of the box, so that the whole apparatus was rugged and self-contained.

This assembly was left, uncovered, in the cabinet at the medium's left, on the floor, for the sitting of July 12 (back in Lime Street, of course). It rang continuously for several seconds, during which Carrington retained complete control of



THE TWO BELL-RINGING MECHANISMS OF LATER 1924

Left: the so-called bell-box, shown in the cheese-cloth cage of page 393, and showing the strip of velvet of pp. 474-5.
Right: the contact table made by Comstock and used in several sittings (p. 399, etc.)

Margery's left, and found it easy enough to verify that no hand or arm crossed over from her right to get access to the box. After several repetitions of this, a new idea was introduced. The illuminated plaque (see page 210) was activated, so as to glow brilliantly; and in this condition was placed so as to cover completely the upper contact board. The bell was rung several times under these conditions and with the same control as before; and no dark object was visible against the plaque either to Carrington or to Adler, who watched carefully. Experiment showed that hands or feet brought close to the plaque were at once silhouetted against it. Twice the plaque was seen to tilt upward several inches as the pressure was removed and the ringing ceased.

The bell-box now became the *pièce de resistance* of the Lime Street seance room. On July 13 it was on the floor at Margery's left; hand and foot control were scrupulously maintained; and the illuminated plaque was used. Walter, in spite of all this, rang the bell as he pleased and as requested, giving combinations of long and short rings for various of the sitters. Then Goodall asked to see Walter's finger (using the term more or less metaphorically, of course) when it pressed on the apparatus. In response to this he was made to see, coming out from under Margery's chair, a process of light, the shape and size of a forefinger; and when it reached the plaque the bell rang. This, of course, is large verification of what any scientific person would have inferred *a priori* to be the case—that we are not dealing with miracles, but with orderly phenomena working under orderly laws. If the contact board is to be depressed, something of some sort must be brought into play as a source of pressure upon it; and what this something was, Goodall saw. Everybody else was naturally keen to witness this unprecedented sight, so Walter said: "Never mind the circle, everybody get up and stand around and look at it." This was done—of course at the sacrifice of hand and foot control; but everybody saw the luminous process, and

saw it ring the bell, and it would be difficult to convince any of them that the question of control had any bearing!

July 15 saw a regular six-ring psychic circus. The bell rang, the tambourine was shaken in mid-air, the megaphone was used for talking and whistling, a psychic dog barked and was represented by Walter to be a pet that Laura C. lost several years ago, a psychic light shone brilliantly on the tambourine, and Margery's keen laughter at all this was heard—all at the same time! The report says nothing about control; the sitters probably were too excited to think much about it, anyway.

Walter's coming was announced on July 16 by peal after peal on the bell, in ones, twos and threes. It was rung on the nineteenth and twentieth, but the report says no more than that. On the twenty-second, I heard my own invention at work for the first time. As usual during this period, it was on the floor at Margery's left and behind her. It rang several times when I, in the circle at Margery's left, and Conant, on the junction at her right, had full control of her hands and feet; and I agreed with Carrington's judgment, formed later under identical circumstances, that the position of the apparatus ruled out fraud from any other quarter. Then at Walter's instructions the box was placed under my chair, where it rang under perfect control which included Adler's and F. H.'s feet. Next it was moved forward, into the space in front of my chair, clear of the chair rung, and here, with the luminous plaque over it, it rang twice without any dark object's being silhouetted against the plaque.

Houdini sat at Margery's left on July 23, and got substantially the same demonstration which I had got the night before. Again, on July 24, sitting in Comstock's apartment, the bell-box worked for Houdini. Detailed discussion of these episodes must be reserved for Chapter XLVIII.

Comstock was now impressed with the idea that gross phenomena go over better than fine ones, and, for a sitting

scheduled for his apartment on the twenty-fifth, without the disturbing presence of Houdini, he constructed a new contact apparatus, which gave Walter the entire table top to press on. As illustrated, there was about this table, a narrow rim which was rigid; the whole top inside this was hinged to the rim at one end, and at the other could be pressed down against the resistance of a supporting spring. Bell and batteries and contact pieces were enclosed beneath the center of the table, so that they were entirely inaccessible for short-circuiting or any other fraud. A depression of perhaps a quarter-inch sufficed to close the contact and ring the bell; but thorough test showed no tendency toward accidental ringing by vibration of the table—the spring was amply strong enough to hold the table-top up against such forces.

Walter worked freely with this apparatus. He rang it for the first time within thirteen minutes after we sat down. Conant and I heard curious tapping noises in and on the table just prior to the ringing. By using the recurrence of these sounds as a warning, we found it possible to anticipate subsequent rings sufficiently to apply tests which would hardly have been feasible without such warning.

When we got this premonition of the second ring, I freed my left hand from Conant's grasp and ran it along the edge of the table next to Margery. The back of my wrist encountered her hair—not low enough to convict her, but too low for a positive acquittal. I said nothing, and waited. The third ring found my right hand accidentally in contact with her head, as she raised mine with hers for the purpose of scratching. At the same time, with my free left hand, thanks to the start given me by the warning taps, I was able to explore clear across to the far corner of the table, arriving there as the ringing stopped. I met no obstruction or material object of any kind. For the fourth ring I had the same head control, *this time intentional*; and I again completed the examination of the table edge nearest Margery, without result.

As a final touch, without any noise which any sitter could detect to indicate an unsuccessful attempt to ring the bell, Walter informed us that a wire was loose. We had to get red light and open the table ; though of course a mere pressure on the table-top verified that the bell was inoperative. Supposing that information of the bell's inoperativeness did not come through its failure to ring under fraudulent manipulation, we have here an even stronger incident than the one of the candy box on page 289.

Walter would do nothing but talk about the committee on July 26. He wouldn't even do that on the twenty-seventh, but went clear back to the technique of many months before, of shoving the table about the floor in code communication. I do not know how it would be possible to prove that this action of the table is genuine, but this episode is about as interesting an indication of its genuineness as I can imagine. The control is very peevish, and takes us right back to the beginning of the case; and, though we know he can do all sorts of things when he wants to, he does this one thing which, when it was occurring regularly, we were least sure was really his work. The idea behind this was that he wouldn't speak to us until we got the committee entanglements straightened out. But under full control on both sides of Margery by Murray and myself, with the bell in its usual inaccessible position on the floor at Margery's left, he finally rang it, as verification of his presence.

On July 28 he rang the bell; no details are given. On the twenty-ninth and thirtieth he ignored it. On August 1 he used it as a direct threat against the scientists, ringing it ten times, monotonously and in regular measure, to indicate that this was all he would ever do for them.

August 3 marked the beginning of a new epoch with the bell box. It was at its usual place on Margery's left; Walter used it to announce his arrival. Then he devoted the evening to it, refusing to turn to anything else. He rang

it repeatedly with both Margery's feet on Carrington's, both her hands in his, the circle being broken for this purpose, and F. H.'s two hands being given to the sitter at his right. Margery would wiggle her toes to prove that they were in her shoes where they belonged. Later Carrington was permitted to explore about the box, with his hands, assuring himself that there was nothing near it and nothing attached to it, immediately before it rang. This exploration was of course impossible while it was ringing, for he had then to hold Margery's hands.

Again on August 4 Walter announced his coming on the bell, and performed on it with the "hug and leap" control of the previous evening, as he termed it. Then he ordered all the other sitters to the far side of the table, and had Carrington sit directly facing the psychic, the only person anywhere near her. With her hands in his, her feet first on his and later in his lap, and him in a position to verify that her chair was perfectly steady, the bell was rung repeatedly.

There had been a suggestion of escape for the skeptic on the third and fourth, in the fact that the ringing always started before Carrington took up his control. One could perhaps claim that Margery had some extraordinarily clever, undetected means of starting the bell; that she then gave her extremities to Carrington; and that presently the bell would stop automatically in some way. There were doubtless ringings on the fourth which this would not cover, but the record is couched in such terms that this might be disputed. But on the sixth, control was fixed and permanent throughout the sitting. F. H. was out, operating; Adler and Cross with Carrington were the only sitters. The whole experience with the mediumship is that very small circles like this get strong results, and the present evening was no exception.

Margery's feet were across Carrington's knees. Adler had her right hand, Carrington her left. The position of her feet

and legs made it impossible for her to reach the bell with her right hand, even if Adler had released it—she would have fallen out of her chair before succeeding. The bell rang twice. Carrington examined the cabinet carefully and found nothing in it save the bell box.

At the end of this sitting Carrington noticed that his hand was faintly luminous. To prove that this was no illusion, Adler, in the dark, was able to reach over and touch the affected spot without fumbling or search. Walter explained that the phenomenon was due to contact with the psychic in such a small circle. Whether so or not, the incident reacts favorably upon the episode of the luminous shoulder-strap on page 372.

All possible criticism of the one-man control was again met on the seventh, in slightly different manner. The psychic placed both her feet initially across Carrington's knees, her shoes off. She placed both hands in his right hand. F. H.'s left hand, thus freed, was extended across the table and put in the custody of Mrs. Augustus Hemenway, a guest whose name will be known to many of my readers as a distinguished patron of things psychic. After this control had been set up and while it was maintained, the bell gave three, five, seven, etc., peals, upon request. Carrington and Mrs. Hemenway now exchanged places and rôles, except that Margery's right hand was now held by F. H., and shifted to Mrs. Hemenway's only after the bell began to ring. Any exception here, however, is met by the previous performance; and by the fact that the bell several times spelled out messages in Morse code, at request. If one believed that the bell could be started by Margery, to ring awhile and then stop, it certainly could not then start and stop itself again and again and again, without *human aid*.

Sitting on August 11 in Comstock's apartment, the contact table of July 25 was again used. Walter expressed the intent of working up into red light with this, but got no

further opportunity to sit with it. On this occasion the bell was rung freely many times in the dark, with Carrington controlling both hands, both feet and the head of Margery, and Miss Wood controlling F. H. similarly. But it readily appeared that for use in the Lime Street house, where there were habitually persons present who could be accused of possible confederacy with more showing of plausibility than any of the present sitters, the table was a less valuable instrument than the little box; for the table is accessible to any hand or head in the circle.

Returning to Lime Street on August 12, therefore, the table was left behind and the box kept in use. At first it was played upon, rat-a-tat-tat, without the bell's ringing. Walter stated that the spring had been tightened; examination verified this. When it had been adjusted, the bell was rung repeatedly, both hands and feet of the psychic being held first by Damon, then by Margaret Deland. F. H.'s hands were held by Mrs. Hemenway while this was in progress.

On August 14 the new one-man control with the bell-box was demonstrated to Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff. On the seventeenth, without record of the control, a parallel manifestation to that of July 13 was given, Walter this time showing his mechanism only to his cousin, Alfred Gray, one of Buffalo's most prominent lawyers and a man of large interests. It was described as a trident-like shape, the middle prong about four inches longer than the side prongs. It came out from the level of the psychic's waist, impinged upon the contact board, rang the bell, and withdrew into her body.

Further startling manifestations of the bell-box in darkness continued intermittently; but starting with this date, it began to move out into the light. The manifestations with this instrument and under these conditions are so definitely the climax of the mediumship that I reserve them for a special chapter, after I have disposed of some very disagreeable routine business.

CHAPTER XLVIII

HOUDINI VS. MARGERY

MENTION has been made, as the march of events brought me into late July, of Houdini's presence at two sittings. In August he sat three times. As a result, he claims to have exposed Margery as an utter fraud; and to this "exposure" he has given wide publication. It is therefore necessary for me to consider in detail his connection with the Margery case, and, too, his general background with the *Scientific American* committee.

When this committee was being organized, it was obvious that a conjuror of wide reputation must be included. The choice rapidly narrowed to one between Houdini and Thurston. All whose opinions should have carried weight advised us to seek Thurston; but a long friendship between Houdini and one of our editors made it easy to approach him, and actually difficult not to do so.

In several preliminary conferences, Houdini spoke very fairly. He posed as an open-minded skeptic, who in many years of contact with mediumship had never seen anything that impressed him as valid; but who was willing to seek further for reality, and to recognize it when he found it. In one direction he pictured this willingness as actual eagerness.

Houdini is a Jew, his paternal name being Weiss. He is of the emotional and artistic rather than the business type. He represents his feeling for his mother, some years dead, as the *dominant emotion of his life*. He never refers to her without the use of adjectives, of which "sainted" is his favorite; and he gives you to understand that his passion to assure himself of the possibility of communication with her occupies a large

part of his mental horizon. I could have wished for a clearer separation of the concepts of psychic research and of spiritualism, and for a better emotional balance; but there seemed no reason to question the man's sincerity.

All five prospective committee men had specified that the other four must be acceptable—we should have been dumfounded had any of them omitted this proviso. But Houdini's attitude here was unique. He regarded himself as the hub about which the committee would revolve, the one member whose abilities were of any moment. He actually rebuffed me when I tried to outline to him the scientific standing of his colleagues. He considered that he had a large reputation to lose in this investigation, while they had nothing of this or any other sort at stake. "Who is this man, McDougall, anyway?" he once burst out to me; "I never heard of him." He was not even willing to assume the personal honesty of his colleagues or to listen to evidence thereof; he regarded a major part of his duties to be the protection of himself and the *Scientific American* against possible collusion between committee members and fraudulent mediums. We saw in all this a reflection of the showman's training and temperament, and we imagined that we should meet much the same thing in any person whom we might select to bring to the committee what Houdini was bringing. We therefore overlooked this angle and named him for the committee, hoping that, in the presence of *prima facie* possibility of genuine phenomena, he would cease to be a showman and, with his colleagues, would display true scientific interest.

In this we were disappointed. There was friction with Houdini from the start. Our first case came up in May, 1923. Houdini was in New York at the time and I named him on the subcommittee in charge. Of three sittings he attended but one. A second case came up in October, while Houdini was on the road; I assumed he could not attend and omitted him from the subcommittee. Newspaper accounts informed him

of the case, and I got a hysterical telegram urging me to prevent a decision until he could arrive and save the committee from itself. The implication was clear that the mediumship was necessarily fraudulent. The committee was indeed in the act of finding it so while Houdini's appeal was on the wire; but they did not find it so without looking at it.

When a third applicant appeared, in November, I wired Houdini; and he replied, he could not interrupt his vaudeville engagements. A fourth case arose at a time when he was in New York on a flying visit; learning of his presence, I added him to the subcommittee. On this showing of fact I think I could charge him with failure to live up to his sweeping initial pledges to drop any business anywhere, any time, and rush to New York whenever we had a case. In point of fact, he cited these incidents—barring the exchanges of telegrams, which he didn't mention—as basis for charging me with having purposely excluded him from participation in the committee's business.

An incident of different character arose in our first case. We had sat twice; Carrington, Prince and I were satisfied that the mediumship was fraudulent, and that our only problem lay in the engineering of a dramatic and convincing exposure. This we did (*Scientific American*, July, 1923), using electrical apparatus designed by Lescarbours and me. Houdini didn't bother to attend the first two seances, at which the important preliminary observations had been made. But discovering that the newspapers were giving us great space, he attended the third. He made no contribution to our successful handling of the case.

A *New York Times* reporter was present, and his paper carried his very adequate account of the proceedings. Following this, and until my complete story of July, there was nothing to be said. Nevertheless, two days later, the *Times* carried a long interview with Houdini, retelling the story in a modified form calculated to locate with him much of the credit for the

detection of fraud, and filled with unwarranted personal abuse of the medium.

The Times has never lied to me, though I have had extensive dealings with this paper. The city editor told me that Houdini had asked for a reporter, given the story as printed, and to the protests of their office that it wasn't new and wasn't his story to release, replied that the *World* would carry it if the *Times* didn't. Houdini denied this, alleging that the interview and its history alike had been concocted in the *Times* office; but showing by his defense that he understood the impropriety which had been committed. The fact was that the *Times* could only regard the story as a closed one, which it would not willingly reopen.

When the Margery case came up, Houdini was, of course, not named for the subcommittee, which was to do all its work in Boston. A situation arising where the subcommittee needed more personnel, Carrington was assigned this duty because he was more free to take it on than Prince or Houdini; and he spent much of the summer in Boston. In May, Prince was in Boston on other business and attended three sittings by invitation of the subcommittee. The situation then existed that Houdini was the only member of the full committee who had not seen the mediumship. It was feared that if this situation continued he would resent it, though of course he had no right to do so or to demand any part in the case until the subcommittee chose to report on it. But as a matter of diplomacy he was informed of the case and invited to view it.

Houdini immediately exploded. By what right did I presume to permit the committee to function in his absence? His mind fixed itself upon the idea that he had been deliberately excluded while an attempt was made to commit a working majority of the judges to a favorable verdict. The impossibility of disposing of the case without bringing it before the full committee meant nothing to him; nor did the honesty and ability of his colleagues. Neither, apparently, do the

facts; for although to this date only one of his four colleagues is prepared to make a definite pronouncement of genuineness, although the case would still be in the subcommittee's hands had not Houdini himself dragged it out, he persistently alleges, in print and from the platform, that the prize was about to be awarded to Margery when he interfered.

As a major consequence of this first idea, Houdini formed another. His colleagues had sat, and fussed, and fussed, and sat, for three months, as he saw it, without finding any fraud. He would now step in, locate in two sittings the deception which had eluded them for fifty, and with one magnificent gesture would save the committee, the *Scientific American* and the \$2,500. He announced this program loudly in advance; and he continues to announce it loudly as constituting the history of what happened.

Houdini is past fifty years old; and he faces the necessity for building up something new to keep him among the headlines of his profession when, as must inevitably happen, he no longer has the physical resources for his fatiguing escape tricks. In building up a new stage personality as exposé of mediums, he *must* behave toward all mediums as he has toward Margery. He *must* assume in advance that the phenomena are fraudulent, *must* at all hazards make them so appear, *must* in every way put the idea across that he is the author of mediumistic exposures, infallible "bad medicine" for mediums.

It was arranged that Houdini should sit with Margery on July 23 and 24. His allegations of dishonesty and incompetence against his colleagues, his explicit assumption that the phenomena of Margery's seances must necessarily involve fraud, led me into conference with Mr. Orson D. Munn, proprietor of the *Scientific American*. We reached what we hoped might prove a solution of this very ticklish development. Munn, the potential payer of the \$2,500, we thought probably one person whose good faith Houdini would feel obliged to grant. Hence, though he had no connection with the committee

and could attend seances only as their guest, we agreed that he must sit when Houdini sat, in the effort to keep him on his good behavior. The necessity for such a step will be apparent when I say that Houdini had now openly abandoned all pretense at judicial consideration. All that had been reported from prior sittings was, in his eye, necessarily the result of mediumistic fraud, false recording by the committee, or more probably both. The phenomena must be invalid because they couldn't possibly be valid. He had supposed that I, at least, had sense enough to know, even where I wasn't clever enough to catch the medium myself, that all seance-room manifestations were fraudulent. And so on, *ad nauseam*. He made it absolutely clear that he was hopelessly committed, in advance, against all possibility of genuineness, with mediumship in general as with any particular medium. His presence on an impartial investigating body was alike a great impropriety and a grave error.

On July 23 we sat in Lime Street, to let Houdini see these premises. He was quick to realize and to admit that there was nothing "wrong" with them. Comstock was kept away from this seance by other business, and in his absence it had never been the custom to use the dictaphone. I was therefore charged with the duty of drawing up, at the end, a statement, which all the others were to sign before leaving the house. As was to be expected and as was proper, modification of my first draft was necessary before all were ready to accept it. As was not to be expected and as was highly improper, Houdini turned up next day with further requests for its modification. With F. H.'s consent these were met; and it is the record as thus modified that I present:

July 23; dark seance. Circle: Margery, F. H., Conant, Munn, Houdini: Bird in control of link, nobody else present.

During first part of sitting nothing observed except Walter's whistle and whisperings. Next, Houdini was touched several times on inside of right leg. He did not announce it, but

Walter did so for him, specifying the place touched. The first time Houdini himself wasn't sure, thinking it might have been the table; the other times he confirmed what Walter said.

First intermission at Walter's request to have Bird's contact box removed from position in cabinet at Margery's left, to new place in front of Houdini. No action in period following this. Second intermission when Walter asked to have illuminated plaque on contact board. Bird left his post to get it but couldn't find it. In his absence Walter called suddenly for control. Walter now announced that megaphone was in the air, and asked Houdini where he should throw it (in Bird's judgment, he didn't talk through it). Toward Houdini, he was told; and he did this. He then instructed Bird to take place in doorway; and almost before Bird could comply, cabinet was thrown violently on its back, with no preliminaries; Margery's chair pushed forward, as usual when this happens.

Third intermission caused by rearrangement of cabinet, red light had for the purpose. Illuminated plaque got out here and put over contact board. After it had been in this position for some little time, with long axis of contact device across in front of Houdini, Walter asked that it be turned so that long axis would run away from Houdini. With the plaque first in the one position and then in the other, some of the sitters (occasionally all of them) observed motion by the plaque. Some movements small and doubtful, some unmistakable. Houdini, in best place for observation, reported raising and lowering, oscillations, movements back and forth. Ultimately it skewed around at an angle. One movement stood out above all others, plaque rising slightly at one end and at least eight inches at other, and standing for an instant at an angle estimated by Bird as perhaps sixty degrees.

Fourth intermission caused by Walter's demand that table be removed from the central space. Done in red light. Movements of plaque continued, and finally contact board rang several short peals and one long one.

Control, in general: F. H.'s right hand in Conant's left. F. H.'s right foot contacted with Conant's left, in style not specifically described. F. H.'s left hand and Margery's right joined by Bird's hand—sometimes Bird's right, sometimes his left. Sometimes had parallel fingers as usual, sometimes one wrist plus fingers from other hand. F. H.'s left foot and Margery's right foot by Bird's left foot, shoe off, foot on floor, flat,

with F. H.'s foot in contact on one side and Margery's on other; from time to time Bird explored with this foot or with free hand, to verify that these feet were attached to their respective legs. When controlling the hand-link with his right hand, Bird used left hand freely for control of Margery's foot; part of the time grasping her ankle and part of the time resting hand on her knee. At such times his foot retained control of F. H.'s foot, crossing over on top of instep and resting on floor on other side of F. H.'s. Margery's left hand by Houdini's right. Margery's left foot resting ankle to ankle with Houdini's right, his in front of (outside) hers, so that his was between hers and the place in front of Houdini where contact box ultimately rested.

During first intermission Houdini moved the box with one hand, retaining control of Margery's hand by placing it on his knee. Other control unchanged.

During second intermission, no attempt to bridge gap in control left by Bird's absence, until Walter called for control. To meet this demand Conant took both F. H.'s hands in his left, and in some undefined fashion made foot contact with both F. H.'s feet. Houdini took both Margery's hands in his left, kept one foot as before, her right foot free (during this short period only). In taking her two hands, he explored each arm to the shoulder to insure that it was her two hands.

No particular remarks about control during balance of sitting. Control was, of course, dropped momentarily during third and fourth intermissions, but except for these interruptions was as described under general head above.

Victrola slowed strongly twice and stopped entirely once. When it stopped, Bird left his post to start it, leaving intermission in which nothing occurred, and in which control was incomplete. F. H. called once to telephone, Bird slipped into his place in circle without interruption in control.

(Signed) HOUDINI,

(Signed) J. MALCOLM BIRD,

(Signed) O. D. MUNN.

To one unrecorded episode I must give space. It goes without saying I always control the junction between F. H. and Margery with one hand, leaving the other free for further use. One thing I have often done with this hand is to explore,

when the light has been called for, in search of movements by Margery which might be interpreted as concealing contraband articles or relieving a guilty position in anticipation of the coming visibility. On such occasions the light, when it came, was apt to catch my hand still in motion. When this occurred on the present occasion, Houdini's eye registered the fact.

He promptly blew up. Why had he not been informed that I had a free hand? I told him that if he had not so been informed his common sense might have informed him. He would not be mollified, but denounced the arrangement which left me with a hand free. Incidentally, first and last, he made four mutually contradictory statements of where my hand was and what it was doing when first he glimpsed it in the dawning light.

If he was willing to suspect me, he was grossly negligent not to establish initially where my hands were. From this and from his failure to object to my presence on the junction, I concluded either that his suspicions were a bluff or that he wished me to have a free hand. If we take his protests at face value, he makes a mountain of a molehill. Where I sat, the only persons who could testify about my hands or attempt their control were Margery and F. H. I do not see how Houdini would be any better off in relying upon their statement that my hands were engaged, than he would be in taking it for granted that they were or in observing as he did that one of them wasn't.

My impression that all the fuss was a smoke screen was deepened when I learned that Houdini and Munn had released each other's hands throughout the dark parts of the seance. I regard the circle as a subjective factor, only so necessary as the medium believes it to be; so I have no complaint against its breaking. This I consider a legitimate measure of investigation. But I do complain when Houdini objects to my having a hand free, openly, the while he himself has a hand free, secretly.

The seance over and the record fixed up and signed, I loaded Houdini, Munn and Conant in my car and started for the hotel. We parked on Beacon Street while we held a *post mortem*. Houdini opened the proceedings:

"Well, gentlemen, I've got her. All fraud—every bit of it. One more sitting and I will be ready to expose everything. But one thing puzzles me—I don't see how she did that megaphone trick."

I explained how other committeemen, as a working hypothesis covering this, had pictured the megaphone on her shoulder while it was supposed to be in the air, and while the "megaphone" voice came by imitation from her mouth. It couldn't be in her lap, I remarked; this was too open to exploration. It couldn't be on her shoulder either, remarked Houdini; he had explored this on the present occasion. Then an expression of relieved triumph spread over his face. Though admitting that he had made no search there, he stated as fact that the megaphone had been on her head during the critical moments. The reasoning here is simple. The megaphone *can't* be in the air; it *must* be somewhere; it is nowhere else; it must be on her head. Ergo, it *is* on her head. Q. E. D. Why bother to look there for it?

The sitting of July 24 was held in Comstock's apartment, behind locked doors. It was recorded dictaphonically by Comstock, and the signatures obtained after transcription. The record follows:

Sitting held at 535 Beacon Street, Boston, July 24, 1924, at 8.40 o'clock.

Order of sitting: Margery, on her left Houdini, on his left Munn, next Conant, next F. H., next Bird, and then Margery again. Bird not in the circle, but controlling the F. H.-Margery link.

On the outside of the circle Miss Wood and Comstock. No one else in the room.

Sitting started at 8.45.

At Walter's request the lights were turned on, the new

table with the depressable top* removed, and a card table with the locked contact-box on it and other more familiar utensils were put in its place.

When the lights were turned out again the time was 8.51.

9.00. Bird says the right-hand wing of the cabinet moved an inch or two in toward Margery.

Houdini says something touched his right knee. At the same time Walter's remark was, "Ha, ha, Houdini."

Bird says the megaphone just moved a bit on the floor.

9.02. Megaphone moved and cabinet shivered, says Bird. Cabinet has opened up widely at the right.

Regarding controls, Houdini says that during the time he was touched on the knee, and for some time before and after he had hold of Margery's left hand with his right hand and his right foot and lower leg is against her left foot and lower leg. At the same time Bird had firm grasp of the Margery-F. H. hands with his left hand and his foot was originally in front of Margery's in contact with her toe. After the first movement of the megaphone, he shifted his foot and put it behind hers in contact with her foot, between her foot and the megaphone, the megaphone originally being on the floor at Margery's right. Conant says from the start he has had F. H.'s right foot and lower leg and right hand.

9.05. Houdini says he feels the cabinet moving against his right arm. He has control as before dictated. Corresponding movement reported by Bird of his wing. He has controls as formerly dictated, including F. H.'s left foot.

9.10. We suddenly noticed that the Victrola was stopped. Comstock went out to fix it and started it going again. Walter says, "I didn't stop it."

9.14. Houdini says the cabinet is shaking and oscillating.

9.15. Victrola stopped again. Walter also disclaims the stopping of the Victrola the second time.

9.18. Bird says megaphone is sliding around the floor. Controls: Houdini, O. K.; Bird, O. K.; Conant, O. K.; O. K. means as previously dictated.

9.21. Bird reports sharp movement of the cabinet. All three controls O. K. as previously described.

9.23. Bird says that he investigated the distance from

* See page 399.

Margery's elbow to the cabinet and found it to be from eight inches to a foot.

9.25. Bird says that there are some raps that seem to be connected in some way with Margery's chair. He says that he has control of all her fingers, as well as her hand in general on this side. The raps continue, he says. Walter says, "It's very simple, it's simply the cabinet banging the arm of the chair."

9.29. Bird says the cabinet is moving up on him from behind and is now in contact with him. Controls all reported perfect.

9.34. Houdini says the cabinet, his edge of it, has gone some distance away from him, and Bird says that his edge has approached him more nearly. Controls have been maintained as formerly, that is hands and feet of both Margery and F. H. are all controlled.

9.36. Bird says cabinet folding in towards Margery very much. Bird's wing is now between Bird and Margery.

9.39. Comstock just went over and pinned the curtains across the door to the hall so that a faint light from the hall would not get in [through the crack between sliding doors].

The cabinet has moved so far that in its present position neither Houdini nor Bird have been able to locate it by their usual method. All controls O. K.

9.40. By the sounds we infer the cabinet is still moving.

9.44. Bird says the table is moving quite a lot.

9.48. Conant says there is a slight pressure of the table on his leg. Continued pressure. A moment later it moved several inches away from him. Conant and Munn say the table went off its legs to some extent and went back in position again. All controls O. K. Bird's control is substantially as formerly; there is a slight difference, however; namely, that his foot is on Margery's instead of beside it.

9.50. Houdini says the table is falling over on him. At present it is leaned up against him, that is it is on two legs. Bird touched by something that felt like a feather stroking up and down his little finger. It passed from his finger down his leg. Houdini verifies that the table is on two legs leaning against him.

9.52. Bird touched on the knee.

9.52½. There was a fairly loud sound of the table. Houdini says the table has dropped back again on four legs.

9.53. Another sound from the table, as if it had been raised off two legs and dropped back again on the floor. Munn says he felt this action of the table.

9.54. At Walter's suggestion the circle was spread out a little to give more room.

9.55. Table is being upset Munn says. Box dropped off the table on to the floor. This was at 9.56. At the instant when the table went over Houdini, Bird and Conant all report that all of their controls were perfect as previously described. Bird's foot still on top of Margery's.

9.57. Munn says table moving. Houdini says he thinks the table is on edge now, that is with the legs horizontal.

10.03. At Walter's suggestion we turned on the lights for ten seconds and looked around. The table was generally the way it had been described in the dark, that is it was tilted upward on Margery's side. The cabinet looked very much smaller and had been moved back. From the hasty glance we had it looked as though it had been folded all together.

10.07. At Walter's suggestion the table was taken out of the circle, the contact-box (locked) was put between Houdini's feet, the controls were all carefully inspected, and the lights were turned out at 10.10.

10.12. The contact apparatus suddenly rang, every one reporting perfect control. The contact rang several times. Control as originally announced. Walter, a moment later, told Munn to sit up. Munn says at the moment that he was leaning over.

10.20. Bird has just changed his foot control. He now has Margery ankle to ankle, his foot beyond hers, between hers and the box.

10.24. At Walter's request we turned on the light for five seconds.

10.27. At Walter's request the red light was put on for five seconds.

10.30. The contact apparatus rang one long peal. All controls reported perfect as previously. Half a minute later another ring. He then asked Munn how many times he should ring it. Munn said five. He then rang one, two, three, four five. He then said "Good-night." We turned on the light to examine positions and controls, etc.

Conant and Munn moved out of the circle in order to make room for a photograph to be taken of the Houdini-

Margery-Bird control. In order to do this it is of course obvious that the control of the right-hand side of F. H. had to be sacrificed for the photograph. As stated, however, this control was maintained at the time of the sitting.

After the sitting we examined the cabinet. We found that both the parts were neatly folded up together so that the whole thing was perhaps only four feet wide and pretty nearly flat. It was more or less symmetrically behind Margery's chair a few inches.

(Signed) D. F. COMSTOCK,

(Signed) R. W. CONANT,

(Signed) G. F. WOOD,

(Signed) J. MALCOLM BIRD.

It is understood and specified by Houdini and Munn that in the event of publication of this document, it shall be published only *in full*, and that no abstracts, quotations, etc., from it shall appear singly.

All the foregoing that came within my personal observation is correct.

(Signed) ORSON D. MUNN,

(Signed) HOUDINI.

Just previous to the sitting, I thoroughly searched Margery. She removed most of her clothes, and I examined her and them carefully. She wore a loose green linen dress into the seance room, and I examined this carefully before she put it on. She also removed her shoes, and I examined her feet and shoes carefully. She then put her shoes on again. She also took down her hair, which I searched.

The search was conducted in the light, and then I also searched her in the dark for luminous spots of any description. No such spots were seen.

(Signed) G. F. WOOD.

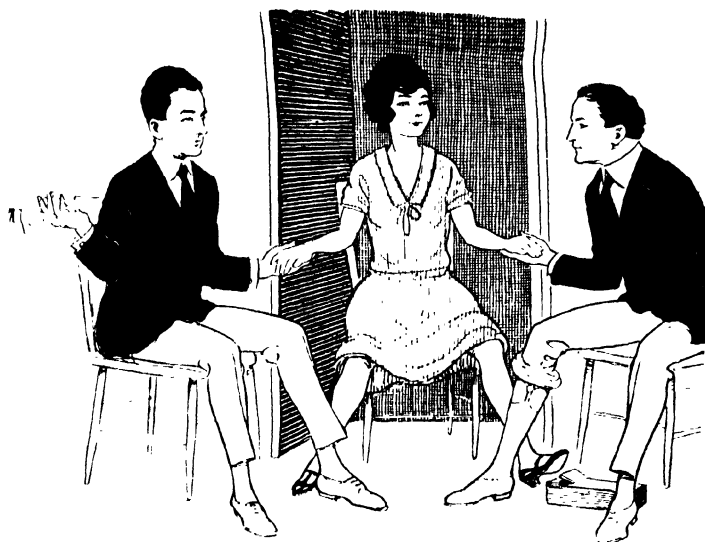
At the end of this seance, Houdini, Munn, Comstock and I withdrew to another room, and Houdini exposed his hand. He stated and Munn verified that during the seance he had whispered to Munn that he "had" her, and had asked whether he should expose her now. Munn had no standing in the room save as a guest, and certainly could not take it on himself to authorize any committee action, individual or collective.

Houdini must have known that he alone was responsible for his own action; that his offer to Munn was a safe one, whatever the physical facts of the moment.

Houdini took it for granted that there would be a swift descent upon New York and a flaming newspaper exposure. This had to be vetoed very diplomatically, and without emphasis upon the weaknesses of Houdini's position; for there was always the prospect of his going through with the exposure on his own initiative. It was in fact only with difficulty that he was prevented from thus immediately capitalizing his connection with the case, through the headlines. The claim that he had found in two sittings the fraud which had baffled all others for fifty was one which Houdini was able to keep temporarily within himself only by prodigious restraint. The position was rendered doubly difficult by a week's vaudeville engagement which he had in Boston, starting September 8. He felt that his dignity as infallible exposé of mediums demanded that he be on public record against Margery before that date. He was calmed only by the pledge of further sittings and an attempt at committee finality in August.

We must now consider Houdini's claims against the two sittings above recorded. These we have on record; he has set them down in a scurrilous pamphlet with a pink cover. I put the title page before my readers in facsimile, so that they may judge whether its story is about Margery, or about Houdini.

The bell-box he alleges to have been rung by clandestine use of her foot. This foot was under his constant control. He states: "I could feel distinctly her ankle slowly and spasmodically sliding as it pressed against mine while she gained space to raise her foot off the floor and touch the top of the box. . . . When she had finally maneuvered her foot around to a point where she could get at the top of the box, the bell-ringing began; and I could positively feel the tendons of her leg flex and tighten as she repeatedly touched the ringing apparatus."



THE DEADLY PARALLEL — See Page 419

Below: foot control as the camera showed it. *Above:* the drawing which Houdini employs to illustrate his claims of fraud. Observe the discrepancy in height and position of bell-box, and position of feet and legs.

I offer in rebuttal the photograph taken at the end of the seance. Houdini's left foot has been moved to permit the box to show; the situation otherwise is as it was throughout the sitting. A study of this picture will indicate why Houdini employs such vague language about "gaining space." If he tried to tell us where and how she gained it, he would be at a loss. I leave the reader to estimate the degree of connivance which would be necessary on Houdini's part before Margery's foot could step on that contact pedal, and the probability that she would take such wild chances with the foot that *he* was controlling. Moreover, careful reading of page 416 will show that on one occasion the slow and painstaking process of chicanery described by Houdini had only two minutes in which to bring Margery's foot from a position of visible innocence to one in which the bell could be rung; and that later the same cycle is alleged to have been completed in three minutes!

But the pamphleteer does not let his case suffer for lack of convincing pictures. The photograph being unsuited to his needs, he has made a drawing of his own. This, too, I reproduce, so that the reader may see how far it departs from true positions and true proportions.

When Houdini's first plea fails, he is ready with another, and another, and yet another. These largely contradict one another, of course, and leave a discriminating reader with the feeling that their author can't have much confidence in any of them. On their face, too, they are merely speculation, since Houdini does not allege that any of the additional ways of making the bell ring were practiced in his presence. Of all the alternative explanations, those which he sets down in his pink pamphlet contradict outstanding facts of the case, and for the most part had already occurred to Carrington and me, and had been outlawed by our consideration. Those which Houdini displays from the stage involve the use of a bell-box which, if you question him cleverly enough, he will admit is so different from Margery's that he dare not let it be examined.

The cabinet and megaphone performance of July 23, Houdini explains adequately. The sequence which he pictures *could* have occurred on that night; but he must of course advance a mere working hypothesis rather than a direct charge, since he pretends to nothing more than the inference that since it could have been done so, it was so done. The idea is that Margery sent me out to rid herself of my control—why I cannot imagine, for in another place I am the confederate! Then after her hand left mine and before it reached his, that she set the cabinet on her foot and the megaphone on her head. Then, hand but not foot control restored, that she pitched the trumpet at him, and with a mighty heave of her foot, threw the cabinet over.

This physical possibility exists—but solely because of Houdini's negligence. When I came back, I reached over and took her hand from his, so that it was never free; why did he not do likewise when I went out? Why did he fail to take her foot at all, when I went out or when Walter called for control? If he *won't* control, Margery can't make him. And if he *won't* control, she will never be able to prove her genuineness in his presence.

The trick I have just outlined, Houdini calls "the slickest ruse" he has ever detected. He says that he alone could and did detect it. The Carrington-Keating records of early July show that, although interruptions in the control at that time were altogether briefer and less obvious, this ruse presented a possibility which they saw at once. They were not content until they had taken measures to rule it out; this was something Houdini did not bother to do—something, perhaps, that he did not want to do. He has added the trick to his own stage repertoire; so perhaps we can consider that Margery has taught him something. But he blindfolds his subjects, to put them in the dark, and remains himself in the full light, so that it is easy for him to find the cabinet and the megaphone and to dodge the loose hand and arm of the subject. Margery, if

she did it so, would be in the dark as much as her dupes. But one does not expect Houdini's "exposures" to duplicate the medium's conditions!

For the table levitation of July 24, Houdini has an explanation which can be met by citing adverse facts. He says Margery did this with her head; he says he felt under the table with his free hand and found her head there. I challenge him on this. Throughout the table levitation, *my* free hand was either on Margery's shoulder or in her lap; if Houdini was listening, he may recall the conversation between her and me that marked the shift from the one place to the other. Throughout this levitation, *Munn's* free hand was under the table, likewise looking for incriminating evidence—and finding none.

These observations by Munn and myself suffer from not being of record. But here they stand better than do Houdini's own claims. There is no possible excuse for failing to record at the moment a positive claim of detected fraud. My observations and Munn's, on the other hand, were of a negative type. One cannot maintain a continuous chatter through the sitting, specifying the various frauds in which one is *not* at each instant catching the medium. One must judge whether the routine, negative observations of her passivity are pertinent for record; and one must sometimes err here—especially if the claims which one's observations would refute are themselves to be kept a secret until the record is completed!

At one stage of this seance, Houdini's and Munn's free hands came together. The contact lasted but a moment and neither said anything—Munn recognized it for what it was and Houdini as a matter of policy would not mention it until later. He did mention it later, as evidence of fraud against Margery; and Munn had to inform him what the fact was. So we have the perfectly gorgeous picture of the super-detective of the seance-room: unable to tell the difference between a large male hand hardened by sports and a well-kept

female hand of moderate size; unable to recognize that the hand he finds with his left is not the mate of the one he holds in his right; unable to judge whether a hand that meets his is joined to a wrist at his near left or at his far right!

The cabinet episode of this date, Houdini admits that Margery herself could not have engineered. Does this lead him to consider the possibility of genuineness? Not at all; it merely leads him to wonder who else did it; and, having found a person who he imagines could have done it, to charge that this person did it. He advances the only claim that he regards as presenting a physical possibility: that *I* manipulated the cabinet. Nobody else, he admits, *could* have done it; ergo, I *must* have done it. My lecture audiences seem to agree with me that Houdini here gives the strongest support to the validity of this manifestation. I hope my readers will make the same estimate as between him and me.

I hesitate to meet this charge on physical grounds. Failing to advance prior objections to my presence on the most critical point of control in the room, Houdini is barred from afterwards alleging fraud by me as an explanation of something which he didn't believe could happen, but which did. But I must urge one physical point. The continuity of my reports of control and of *cabinet movement* was even greater than the record would show. If not sufficient to indicate my continuous presence at my post, these reports certainly would establish my presence there during the most critical periods of cabinet disturbance! And if Houdini alleges that I could handle that cabinet as it was handled, in the dark, without leaving my seat for a considerable period—well, he flatters me, but in a way I fear I cannot accept.

Let me now advance a working hypothesis. This would be, first, that on the twenty-third, Houdini deliberately refrained from proper control, to pave his way out from the admission of genuineness. Second, that in addition to this allegation against himself, he intended such further charges

against Margery or others as he might find necessary. Third, that on realizing my free hand, his reaction was one of fear lest I discover something contradictory to his claims. Fourth, that he later realized how he could hang his case on that free hand; hence that he refrained from saying anything prior to the second sitting that might lead to altered arrangements.

Such a hypothesis fits all the facts. Unless we accuse Houdini of a gross unintentional negligence which would not be his in the face of possibly genuine phenomena, I can conceive no other theory that does this. How can we recognize his behavior as other than studied, wilful negligence? How else can we motivate this?

One embarrassing question remains, to plague Houdini ever since these seances. The records chronicle the liberal occurrence of phenomena; they carry the direct statement of perfect control, by him as by others; they bear his signature. How is he to explain this away?

Driven to the point where he cannot ignore it, he explains it away by a preposterous definition. The sole function of control, with honest research, is to make fraud impossible, so that anything occurring is stamped at once as genuine. But Houdini is of a school that looks through differently colored glasses. The exponents of this school find it less desirable to prevent fraud in the search for the genuine, than to discourage or deny the genuine in the search for fraud. It gets such an "investigator" nowhere to prevent fraud. If he does this, only two things can happen—neither of which he wants! Either he will have a blank seance or he will have genuine phenomena. The "researcher" of this type is no scientist. He is a journalist or a showman; he wants action, he wants exposure, and he wants them at once.

So to him "control" means outguessing the medium. It means assuming that she is a fraud, acquiescing in the fraud, and following it to its end. There are circumstances, given valid ground for assuming fraud to be present and given pro-

vision for independent evidence that it is there, where this course is justifiable. In the present instance, neither justification appears. The absence of the first prerequisite for following the procedure that Houdini follows is a mere matter of ethics, and of course bothers him not at all. But the absence of the second one is a very serious practical matter, and embarrasses him mightily—puts him, in fact, in a thoroughly ridiculous position. In the very nature of the case, the course which he followed can bring no more conclusive issue than a question of veracity between Houdini and Margery. "You did!" "I didn't!" "You did!" "I didn't!" We expect small children to get into a jam like this, but from grown men who assume the rôle of scientific investigators we look for something better. Houdini deliberately puts himself in this absurd position, where he has no scrap of evidence against Margery. Asked by his audience at Boston Symphony Hall why he didn't expose her on the spot, he must ignore the query—because there is no answer! And he poses as the great detective of the seance room!

The first to inform Houdini that this was his position was Munn himself. He had a tough time, too; for Houdini was distinctly under the impression that his word was better than Margery's, and wanted to argue the matter out on that basis. He thought he had but to shout at her from the housetops, and the incident would be closed; but he found that he had overestimated his own credit and underestimated hers. He found that even his committee colleagues would not grant the finality of his exposure, and that he would have to go back and do it all over again, in a different way. We shall see *how he fared when he attempted this.*

CHAPTER XLIX

WALTER VS. HOUDINI

THE second series of sittings with Houdini present, to which the preceding chapter looks forward, was scheduled for August 25, 26, and 27. Something of the circumstances leading up to them will appear in Chapter L; here, we need only state that an attempt was to be made at getting a final verdict by the full committee. Prince was therefore to attend, as well as Comstock and Houdini; McDougall could not be located and the business proceeded without him. Carrington had pronounced the mediumship genuine and withdrawn from further sittings. Munn was once more to attend, to exert a little pressure from the outside upon the committee, in the direction of good behavior and adequate procedure.

It was desired to have mechanical or automatic control of some sort, which would function independently of any lapse on the part of any sitter. Houdini endorsed this idea; and when asked whether he could manufacture control apparatus which would leave Margery comfortable and which under his guarantee, would prevent fraud to the point where fraud "would not enter the discussion at all," he gave a prompt and categorical affirmative. He was authorized to proceed.

Recalling the *a posteriori* allegations which had followed the July sittings, F. H. worked out a form of agreement to be put to all present for signature. It bound them to the correct definition of control; and it pledged them to insert in the record *every fact* about the phenomena or the surrounding circumstances which they regarded as pertinent. There were to be no more *post mortems*.

As Chapters LI and LII will make clear, in friendly sit-

tings the phenomena were now emerging into red light; so F. H. suggested that the critical seances be held under these conditions. It is a matter of universal experience that the greatest problem confronting the psychic investigator is to get the medium to sit in decent light. Here was a spontaneous offer to do so; one could only imagine that the committee would jump at it. Not so. *Houdini absolutely refused to sit other than in total darkness.* He gave no reason for this extraordinary stand—he could of course have none that he would dare give.

As usual, I was going to Boston in my car. Munn told me that Houdini's control apparatus was a huge cage in which Margery was to be enclosed; and he instructed that I offer to transport this. Knowing that I planned to go a day or two in advance, Houdini elected to regard this offer as a conspiracy whereby his *fraud-proof cage* was to be placed at Margery's disposal for her to practice with, learn the ways of, *develop the technique of fraud in.* I decided that there was something peculiar about that "fraud-proof" cage.

F. H. visualized mechanical control to mean handcuffs or ropes. To insure Margery's comfort, he stipulated that whatever apparatus were used on her should also be applied to Houdini. Houdini accepted this but brought only one cage to Boston. When F. H. saw it he decided he could waive the point. In one detail he was in error; the cage was inadequately ventilated. The committee as usual attempted no thermometric observations; but Margery was always hot in the cage, and always perspired excessively therein.

The cage is pictured, and I need say only that the boards of which it was built were about an inch thick. It was to be in the cabinet, Margery in it; phenomena were to be produced, if at all, outside the cage. Holes in the sides provided for Margery's hands to issue; or the circle could be omitted, these holes boarded up, and Margery confined wholly within the cage save for her head.

The use of such a cage would be legitimate enough, if too sweeping conclusions were not to be drawn in the event that phenomena fail to occur. One explanation for such failure would be that fraud had been prevented; but it might equally be that the cage had prevented genuine phenomena. Unless, with Houdini, we mean to deny offhand the possibility of psychic manifestations, the use of this cage involves the assumption that the psychic force either issues from the medium's head, or else is capable of penetrating an inch of wood. This is a very gratuitous assumption indeed; the possibility should always be kept in mind that it may contravert the facts. Margery's attitude was that she did not know whether the cage would stop the phenomena but that she was willing to try it. With due regard for the probability that Houdini would look upon failure as proof of fraud, F. H. made the following statement part of the record:

"The psychic does not refuse to sit in the cage made by Houdini for the committee; but she makes the reservation that she knows no precedent in psychic research where a medium has been so enclosed; and she believes that such a closed cage gives little or no regard for the theory and experience of the psychic structure or mechanism." Prince strongly entertained a similar reservation; the general content of his remarks was that the committee was supposed to be in pursuit of psychic phenomena, not of miracles. But he and his colleagues went right along with use of the cage.

Collins, Houdini's confidential assistant, arrived in Boston with the cage on the morning of the twenty-fifth, and got it set up in Comstock's apartment, where the sittings were to be held. Throughout the three days of its use it was the center of conflict. The other committeemen naturally assumed that they were to familiarize themselves with it, and F. H. naturally assumed that it was subject to examination on Margery's behalf. Houdini's program included no place for these items. Munn, like myself, had had dealings with Houdini which con-

vinced him that the cage possessed a "gimmick" of some sort; but, like me, he had no idea what the trick was, or even in what direction it pointed. But he continually urged Comstock to insist upon committee examination of the cage; and Comstock, in recognition of Houdini's formidable and unscrupulous ways of controversy, was always postponing the fatal moment of conflict. Hence the issue was joined only gradually; but the stage was finally reached where specific demands by his colleagues for the examination of the cage were met by Houdini's specific refusal to permit its examination. If you ask why they didn't go right ahead and examine it, I can only answer that they were afraid of Houdini. As for him, in and out of the seance room, his whole conduct revealed eagerness to keep the cage out of view as much as possible. He even refused to leave it in Comstock's apartment overnight, requiring Collins to truck it down cellar and lock it up.

As a condition of mechanical control, F. H. specified that Margery should have a sitting, surrounded only by friends, and using the apparatus so provided. The idea was to get Walter's assurance that the controlling devices were satisfactory to him, and Margery's that they were comfortable to her. It was not his intent that this sitting should be held with committeemen about, but he was maneuvered into this procedure by Houdini, who remained in the room until Margery had got into the cage and the covers had been fastened down. Then he withdrew, and the friendly circle sat for perhaps half an hour, while the committee and all its assistants waited in another room. Walter came through, whistled and talked, and said that everything was O. K.; they might leave the scene to the committee.

A running record was kept, but since nothing was produced of a possibly psychic character beyond the Walter voice, I find it advantageous to deal with the sequence of events in narrative fashion, using the record only as a source. Shortly after the formal committee sitting started, a violent noise was



HOUDINI

Exposes the tricks used by the
Boston Medium "Margery"
 to win the \$2500 prize offered by the Scientific American

Also a complete exposure of
ARGAMASILLA

The famous Spaniard who baffled noted Scientists of Eu
 and America, with his claim to

X-RAY VISION



HOUDINI IN AND OUT OF THE SEANCE ROOM

Left: Margery sitting in the cage brought by Houdini and used for the three August, 1924, sittings attended by him. *Above:* the title page of the pamphlet in which Houdini purports to expose the mediumship, here reproduced to permit the reader to judge whether the story is about Margery, or about Houdini.

heard; on turning on the light, the entire top of Margery's cage was found open, the diagonal doors having been thrown back. Houdini at once stated that anybody sitting in it could thus throw it open with the shoulders. No movement of Margery's hands or tension of her muscles was noted by Prince or claimed by Houdini; but aside from this, there was at once the sharpest questioning of Houdini. Margery, F. H. and committeemen in one breath demanded the object in constructing an "absolutely fraud-proof cage" in which this perfectly elementary fraud was possible. No satisfactory explanation was ever forthcoming; none was in fact ever attempted—for none is possible.

The discussion became so acrimonious that Walter demanded another session with his friends, to clear the atmosphere. This lasted some fifteen minutes, after which the committee was again called in. There had been much alternation between light and darkness, and all persons present had been in and out of the room. The bell-box was on the floor, at Margery's left, outside her cage. She had been uninterruptedly in the cage; whatever the case with others, she had had no opportunity to tamper with the bell-box. Some of her friends individually may have had such opportunity; collectively they had certainly had it, for they had been alone in the room during their preliminary sitting.

Prior to the sitting, the bell-box had been rung often, by everybody, and it was then in its usual order. With committee sitters now in place for their second attack, Houdini released a hand and again rang it, to verify that it was operative. This was in red light. Houdini had often rung the bell, and is chargeable with knowledge of the pressure normally required to do it. It rang when he pressed it and he reported nothing eccentric in its action. From this moment the box was inaccessible to any other person in the room; if it is now found to have been tampered with, Houdini is in the position of the last person who saw the murdered man alive.

Within less than two minutes Walter's voice was heard. The conversation cannot be given word for word, because it was not so recorded. It can, however, be reproduced with very large accuracy, from the combined memories of those present:

Walter: Houdini, have you got the mark just right? You think you're smart, don't you? How much are they paying you for stopping phenomena here?

Houdini: I don't know what you're talking about; it's costing me \$2,500 a week to be here.

Walter: Where did you turn down a \$2,500 contract in August?

Houdini: In Buffalo.

Walter: You had no work for all this week. How much are you getting for stopping these phenomena?

Comstock: What do you mean by this, Walter? This isn't psychic research.

Walter: Comstock, you take that box out into white light, examine it, and report back. You'll see fast enough what I mean.

Comstock did as instructed. Tucked down into the angle between the contact boards he found a rubber eraser, off the end of a pencil. It did not make the bell wholly inoperative; but Comstock estimated that it required about four times the usual pressure to ring it.

Nobody was asked whether he had put the eraser there; nobody seemed to know just what to do next—except Houdini, who at once volunteered that he had not done it. No further evidence was ever got. That which I have cited shows obvious and clean-cut opportunity for Houdini to have placed the obstruction. The fact that the bell was not wholly out of action suggests that it was placed in a hurry, as by such a trick, and not carefully and at leisure. That, under the given conditions, Houdini *could* do what was done he would be the first to insist. No equal opportunity can be shown for anybody else. And in view of Houdini's failure to report difficulty

in ringing the bell, we are entitled to some assumption that, when he made this "test," either the obstruction was not in place, or it was there and he knew it was there.

Following this seance, the committee for once insisted on a course of action, demanding that the top of the medium's cage be properly secured. Next morning Houdini and Collins added padlocks and staples to the cage doors, doing the work in the seance room, behind locked doors. Conant has been so long in Comstock's employ that he has access to his apartment at all times, and carries a key for this purpose. On the morning to which we have now come, he had business in the apartment, and as naturally as anything could be he let himself in with the key, without ringing. The telephone sounded as he entered, and he stepped across the hall to answer it, the act bringing him close to the door behind which Houdini and Collins were at work. The door burst open and Houdini catapulted out of the room, in violent language denouncing Conant as a spy whom he had caught eavesdropping in Margery's interest. By reporting the incident to Comstock with a demand for Conant's dismissal he proved that the accusation was not merely a matter of nerves and hot blood—and also, he got himself roundly laughed at. The episode reinforces the strong presumption already existing that there was something radically wrong about that "fraud-proof" cage; and it throws strong light upon Houdini's penchant for promiscuous suspicions and charges.

I have indicated that I myself became a victim of this, but I have not indicated a tithe of the things Houdini says of me. In his pink pamphlet he gives me so much space that Mrs. Bird, on reading the document, wanted to know whether it was an "exposure" of Margery or of me. If I say that in most matters of detail and all of principle his allegations against me are fictitious, and have been denied by Munn and by committee members who are in a position to know the facts, I shall have met his silly charges as far as is necessary or appropriate in

a volume that revolves neither about him nor about me. The only point in mentioning them at all is to show how all-inclusive he is with his allegations. Carrington is another sufferer; Comstock and McDougall have had their abilities if not their integrity aspersed; and before Houdini left Boston, Munn's efforts to keep him in order and to get a square deal for Margery had led him to express doubt about the good faith of the potential payer of the \$2,500! It is my experience that one who will trust nobody will himself do with very little trusting.

Prior to the sitting of the twenty-sixth, Margery was searched in some detail by Miss McManama, the stenographer. The committee record carries no reservation against the competence of this examination, and it includes a pledge to record every pertinent fact; yet two of the judges have made *a posteriori* exceptions to Miss McManama's adequacy for the duty which they had assigned her. Margery and F. H. offered to permit a full anatomical examination by any physician to be designated by the committee; and such a step would automatically have put her clothing in the way of absolute search. This offer Houdini rejected—apparently the last thing he wanted was evidence tending toward Margery's innocence.

The medium went from Miss McManama's hands directly to the seance room, and under the eyes of the committee climbed into the cage. The record does not indicate whether the top was at once closed down and control of her hands through the portholes established; but since some of the committeemen were not satisfied that adequate search had been given, we must infer that this was done—else the charge of gross negligence lies.

The room at least had been thoroughly examined; and Comstock's explicit move to search the medium's cage had been checked by Houdini's positive refusal to have it searched. After Margery was in her seat, her hands controlled through the portholes, the covers down, and all set to start the sitting,

Houdini on some pretext put his arm in through a porthole and passed it about inside the cage. Before and after this, he cautioned Prince, several times, with what Prince resented as extreme superfluous emphasis, not to relinquish Margery's hand on any account whatever. Margery's suspicions aroused, she said: "What's the matter with you, Houdini, that you keep on saying that? If you're not sure that everything is all right, why don't you search me again, and search this cage?" There was more argument here, Margery insisting upon this further search, Houdini being emphatic against it. He prevailed, and the seance started.

Walter came along promptly. He immediately asserted that there was a ruler in the cage with the psychic, under the cushion on which her feet rested; by innuendo rather than explicitly he charged Houdini with having put it there; he swore fearfully at Houdini, called down curses on his head, and applied opprobrious epithets to him.

One term which Walter used here was that in connection with which the rejoinder was once current, "When you call me that, smile!" The original significance of bastardy has been completely lost in the routine use of the term which this suggests. But Houdini buried his face in his hands, groaned, almost wept, and cried out: "Oh, this is terrible. My dear sainted mother *was* married to my father!"

Comstock again interfered at this point, reminding Walter that this wasn't psychic research; if there were a ruler in the cage it might have been accidentally left there. The tension relaxed somewhat. Collins was called in to testify that he had left no ruler in the cage; then the seance went on, the effort being to get phenomena rather than to check up on Walter's charge. But finally the cage was opened and Houdini looked for the ruler.

He found, at the spot designated, a two-foot jointed rule, of the sort used by carpenters. Folding into four sections, with overlap at the joints, its minimum length is seven inches;

when brought down to this length, it is of course fat enough to destroy any confidence that it could be so concealed in Margery's clothing as to elude even an amateur search. But up the sleeve of any man present, it could, of course, in the absence of search, easily have been. Or equally, it could have been where it was found, from before the seance.

Houdini here adds another characteristic touch to the record: "I wish it recorded that I demanded Collins to take a sacred oath on the life of his mother that he did not put the ruler in the cage and knew positively nothing about it. I also pledged my sacred word of honor as a man that the first I knew of the ruler in the cage was when I was so informed by Walter." Nobody but Houdini could have dictated this; it is one hundred per cent characteristic of the way he thinks and talks.

The committee made no attempt to handle the ruler in such way as to preserve any finger prints which might have been on it. Hence no further evidence developed, after the close of the incident. For the better part, I leave the evidence again to the reader, reminding him only of Houdini's clean-cut and self-made opportunity to introduce it. On one point, however, I must come down hard.

Houdini claims, in his pink pamphlet, that the intent of the ruler was to produce ringing of the bell-box, during a second stage of the sitting where Margery's hands were to be inside the box, and free save as the box confined them. He shows how, using the neck-hole as orifice, and disregarding the awful clatter that would ensue, it might have been possible for her to do this. I find it suggestive to note in this connection that the ruler is exactly the right length to work as he indicates, with the bell-box *where the committee placed it, in a different position* from the one it occupied the night before. Equally suggestive do I find it when I am told that, before the seance, Houdini several times measured the distance from the neck-hole to the bell-box, announcing the reading, each time,

with great emphasis. How did he know that this measure was to be of such importance? All this, I think, goes a long way toward meeting the claim, which Houdini has not advanced but which might be advanced in his behalf, that Margery introduced the ruler; not for her own use, but as a "plant" against Houdini.

A sitting was attempted for the twenty-seventh, but fell through completely. Margery sat in the cage and sweltered for an hour, while the committeemen, who had been together most of the day, wrangled about whether they wanted her hands in or out. At the end, Comstock finally took a stand about the cage. He laid down substantially this ultimatum to Houdini:

"All through these sittings you have tried to get us to refer to that cage in the records as the committee's, and insisting that it isn't yours. But you have refused to let us examine it, and you have behaved in others ways as though the cage were yours. Now you must choose. If it is the committee's cage, it stays here for the committee's future use."

Houdini needed no time to think that one over. He admitted that it was his cage, and took it back to New York with him. He took it out of Comstock's apartment that night; and no member of the committee ever examined it, or, if Houdini was able to prevent, so much as saw inside it. Yet he tells his audiences that it was the committee's cage, examined and accepted by all members thereof.

On the twenty-seventh, a photograph of the cage was to be made. Margery didn't want to sit in it for this purpose, the picture being frankly for publication. She was persuaded, under suitable guarantees. While the subject of a substitute for her was under discussion, Houdini burst out:

"That cage is sacred to this woman. She has sat in it. Sooner than permit any other person to desecrate it, I would take it out and sink it in the deepest part of the sea!" This is the cage—at least, he says it is—which he now drags about

on his vaudeville act, using it on the stage to demonstrate his claims of how Margery does her tricks. One wonders whether sacred oaths and sacred words of honor carry with him the same weight as sacred cages; he uses the word too often to permit its carrying much conviction.

Several times during his stay in Boston, Houdini was called upon to renew the guarantee that the cage was fraud-proof; he never hesitated to do so. Equally, several times, once in particular when boasting of his skill to Laura C., he was asked whether he could go inside the cage and produce phenomena outside it. He was always emphatic that he could easily do so. Prior to the sittings, at Comstock's demand, Houdini asserted that the box was so completely fraud-proof that the element of fraud need not be taken into consideration at all; that any phenomena obtained outside the box while Margery was inside were necessarily genuine. Throughout the sittings he contradicts this; and today he appears on the stage, sitting in this box and ringing tambourines on the floor outside it. Is it not obvious that he played fast and loose with his colleagues as with Margery?

Houdini brings charges against Margery. He has no evidence against her; she has excellent logic and evidence with her defense. Walter then steps to the bar, with charges against Houdini—charges that in and out of the seance room he attempted fraud against the medium. All the evidence is with these charges, none with Houdini; his defense is restricted to mere reiterated denial. And his record in the matter of the "fraud-proof" cage, which to a large extent is down in black and white over his own signature, must always stand, a grim specter to haunt his reply to any charges which may arise against him out of the Margery case. His conduct, from beginning to end, was that of one who was firmly committed to the proposition that psychic phenomena cannot and must not be; and who is determined to establish this thesis by any means whatsoever.

CHAPTER L

AND WHAT OF THE COMMITTEE?

So much for Houdini. But after we have discounted and dismissed him, there remain three eminent members of the *Scientific American* committee who to date have withheld any statement of genuineness. Margery's friends emphasize that Prince has sat ten times, Comstock 56 times, McDougall 22 times; and that none of the three is willing to stamp her as a fraud or to say anything making it appear that he thinks her probably a fraud. But though this is highly significant, the question must be met why they do not stamp her genuine.

The committee took over the case on April 12, 1924. Comstock and McDougall were the subcommittee in charge; later Carrington was added. This subcommittee was competent to determine its own line of attack, and privileged to do so. I have outlined on page 153 the policy which it adopted—one that obviously involved the giving of a much larger number of seances, before making any attempt at judgment, that would have been necessary or desirable under another procedure. All this was the subcommittee's business, and nobody's else.

At the same time, we must make certain demands upon the subcommittee. We must require that they pursue a definite and self-consistent program, and that their work with the case shall bring them visibly nearer both to personal conclusions, and to formal discharge of the case into the hands of the full committee. Theoretically they have the right to consider the case in any way and at any length. Practically they must show that they are getting somewhere with it; practically the full committee is entitled to expect and to demand a dis-

charge of the case, with a report of *some* sort, within reasonable time.

This criterion of effective work the committee has failed conspicuously to meet. I have just cited the number of sittings enjoyed by Comstock and McDougall. I have remarked, in my opening chapter, that an honest and competent and serious-minded investigator cannot sit indefinitely without arriving at an opinion; and I regard it as a monumental confession of inadequacy that neither of these judges, after all this experience, is ready to say anything more than that it is all very interesting, and that he hopes to see more of it.

Carrington was wholly satisfied of genuineness when he drove back to New York with me, after his ten sittings in May. F. H. has documentary evidence to this effect; Carrington himself, had it not been that his connection with the committee would have made a personal statement by him out of order, would at that time have been willing to express in print his conviction of validity. After my sixth sitting I was aware of the very heavy probability that I was witnessing genuine phenomena; after my tenth or twelfth—it is difficult to say exactly when one surmounts the last obstacle—I had discarded from my mind the slight reservations till then remaining. Dingwall was sufficiently impressed with a *single seance* to consider it worth his while to cross the ocean to study the case; having come, it took him no longer to determine the facts than it did Carrington or me. I need make the contrast no more pointed than it is.

Comstock, I believe, is well aware, in his own mind, of the validity of Margery's phenomena. The stumbling block that keeps him away from any pronouncement and any conclusion lies in his ambition always to go a little further and do a little better than he has gone or done. He is like the artist who never knows when his work is finished, but who goes on dabbling with further touches until one fine day he awakes to the realization that he has spoiled the canvas. I believe that no

matter what brilliant phenomena might occur in his presence, under no matter what conditions of finality, he would seek a way to improve the manifestations or the conditions or both; and that he would then be dissatisfied until his new program had been met. With F. H. (*Scientific American*, January, 1925), I can say of him:

"I have all confidence in Comstock's integrity of purpose. I regret that his conscience and his sense of responsibility seem to be such as to make him try to find the psychic laws [and their *modus operandi*] before he announces the facts, whereas the facts in this investigation are all that is asked of him. He apparently wants to write the *final* chapter of psychic research, in a situation where all that is called for is the mere certificate of reality for a single type of phenomenon."

With McDougall the situation is a little different. I cannot discover that he is satisfied in his own mind, and I believe that he is not. He is superstitious about the possibilities of fraud; he lacks confidence in his own ability to say whether fraud has or has not been excluded. He leaves the seance room, after a brilliant performance, granting freely that he knows no way for fraudulent production of what he has seen; that he can, in fact, by no possible stretch of imagination conceive such a way. But he is always afraid the way exists, and hence he withholds any definite statement of validity. I must confess that I share F. H.'s despair here; I do not see how it is ever going to be possible to get McDougall over that last hurdle.

When Miss Wood sat on the sofa that blockaded the doorway while the cabinet in the seance room was torn apart with extreme violence, McDougall felt that, for all he knew to the contrary, she may have *gone to sleep* there and slept through the racket while "the man with the axe" entered, did his work, and made his escape; and this in spite of the fact that Miss Wood produced a complete stenographic record of the sitting, dictated by Comstock as we went along. I am neither jesting here nor exaggerating; it was on this specific plea that

McDougall withheld the verdict of genuineness in this instance. In other instances, he has not had even so tenuous and improbable a specific plea as this, but refrains from endorsement on his general fears that his knowledge is not adequate, and his general repugnance against disturbing the "philosophy of a lifetime" (page 476).

Now, it is understood that no human being knows everything. But in excluding fraud we deal with the possible methods of fraud in classes, rather than in detail. We know there are many ways in which the sleight-of-hand artist can do certain things, if he is but permitted to touch the apparatus. We make certain that it is insulated against his touch or that of any of his auxiliary mechanism; that it is isolated in space. With this simple precaution we exclude the whole complicated series of mechanical frauds. Magnetic fraud we similarly exclude by making certain that there is no magnetic susceptibility on the part of the object that moves, rather than by searching the premises for magnets. All other frauds we similarly exclude in general rather than in detail. And our abilities *are* adequate for the exclusion of all known scientific principles, even though we do not know all the specific techniques through which some of these principles might be applied. If we lack the confidence to reason this way and to reach the conclusion of validity when the facts call for this conclusion, we should admit our inadequacy *beforehand* and stay out of the seance room. McDougall is afraid of the hypothesis of genuineness; and until he masters that fear he has no place in psychic research.

Aside from these temperamental disqualifications, the subcommittee displayed the grossest negligence in the actual handling of the case. European readers will find it difficult to believe that three persons presuming to do psychic research held 80 sittings with Margery and never made any attempt to take her temperature, pulse, respiration, blood pressure, or weight—either before, during, or after seances. They never

recorded the temperature of the room or the character of the weather. In addition to the incredible negligence in dealing with the scales and their weights, chronicled in Chapters XXXV and XLII, it is a fact that up to December 30, when Dingwall and I did these things in concert, he for his purposes and I for mine, no measurements of the seance room had ever been made; none of the apparatus of the seance room had ever been weighed; and it was not known how much pressure was normally required to ring the bell of Chapters XLVII and LII. Except when the seance action was of such character that F. H. demanded it for his own files, no attempt was ever made to secure the assent of other committee sitters to Comstock's dictaphone records; and when this *was* done, it was left to F. H. Failure to insist upon the elementary routine requirements, when he saw how his colleagues were neglecting these, is the one criticism which I have to bring against Carrington.

If Comstock and McDougall were afraid of the notion of genuineness, the case of Prince is altogether different. He is afraid of nothing under the sun; if he saw the mediumship as valid he would say so, without hesitation. But he has neither the time nor the temperament for adequate consideration of the case. He has not given it adequate consideration; and he has committed some extraordinary errors of procedure in his contact with it.

As Research Officer of the American Society for Psychical Research, one of Prince's duties was the viewing of mediumships. It is an obvious physical impossibility for him to view all the mediums there are; he is therefore chargeable with full responsibility for discriminating between the ones that may be profitably investigated and those that may not. He got permission to view the Margery mediumship in the late summer of 1923; he first viewed it in May, 1924, when he was in Boston on other business. He pleads that his editorial routine was so heavy as to make it absolutely impossible for him to do any better here. At the least, he is chargeable with a very

bad guess as to the probable importance of the mediumship. With very little effort he could have got data which would have made it possible for him to reach the judgment that the case was of such sorts that determination of its valid character if it were valid, or equally of its invalid character if it were invalid, was a matter of paramount importance in American psychic research. I got these data, so did Dingwall. I was able to sit for a week and ten days at a time, repeatedly, without permitting my editorial routine to suffer. Dingwall was able to give something like two months uninterruptedly to the case, and he is to the British Society all that Prince was to the American one. I fear that Prince will have to stand or fall on the record: for ten months he slept on the most important mediumship that America has ever produced; then after a waking interval of three days he renewed his slumber, and is still asleep.

For, after making contact with the case, Prince apparently was unable to recognize the obvious importance of the mediumship. He was in Boston on other business, and he communicated with F. H. He was informed that a *Scientific American* subcommittee was working on the case, and he was invited to sit with his colleagues as often and as long as he could. He sat three times, then returned to New York, breaking a tentative engagement for a fourth sitting to do so. And then he stayed in New York for over three months before making any further attempt to sit. I think it fairly obvious that, after seeing it as before, he was under a rather large misapprehension about the mediumship.

Prince's personality is a difficult one. He is one of those people in whom rugged intellectual honesty sticks out all over, like spines on a cactus; and, as with the cactus, this is not an unmitigated advantage to other folks. He has an extreme sense of his own scientific responsibility; extreme appreciation of the difference between first and second hand evidence; extremely little use for incompletely proved facts. To a gross

and absurd degree he exaggerates the demands of valid scientific procedure that he ignore all observations and all results other than his own. The result of all this is the appearance of putting heavy discount on the other fellow's work and heavy premium on his own; and I am not entirely certain to what extent this result is due to the causes which I have just analyzed, to what extent it results from the conceit which it so strongly suggests. In manner the man is abrupt and didactic, to a degree strongly supporting the suggestion immediately preceding; and he makes no successful attempt to control these qualities in the seance room. I get along with him, myself, well enough. But I can thoroughly understand, and I am sure the reader will thoroughly understand, why the adjective "cantankerous" is often applied to him; why at least one medium of large repute refused to sit for our committee, advancing his membership as a major ground for this stand; why, the more Margery and F. H. saw of him, the more they came to associate his presence in the seance room with an element of discord and suspicion.

My own criticism of Prince's part in the Margery case revolves, I believe, chiefly about one center. In accepting membership on our committee, Prince took upon himself an obligation to coöperate with his associates. He is no longer an individual when he becomes a committeeman; he must lay down some of the prerogatives of an individual and must accept in their stead certain joint responsibilities. The committee does not consist of five individuals, each laboring toward an individual conclusion, while the medium and the public and the *Scientific American* stand by and hope against hope that some of these individual conclusions will coincide. It consists of five committeemen, supposedly acting *in concert* and in the effort to arrive at a *common* conclusion. If my abstract of Prince's temperament in the preceding paragraph is an illuminating one, it will have indicated that he would find it difficult to lay down the rôle of an individual and take on that of a

committee member. In point of fact he appears to have found it quite impossible, for he never did it, in any slightest degree.

His first failure was recorded on his first evening. F. H. explained to him the custom of drawing up a memorandum, during or after the seance, to stand as official record. Now Prince, I might have said above, never *discusses*; he *dispenses finality*. He dispensed it here to F. H. He refused to make any contribution to a committee record, to approve or disapprove such a document when drawn up without his aid, to sign it, to check it against his own record, to recognize it in any way. It was his custom to draw up a record, for his own files, of every psychic experience which he met. An abstract of this record, carrying his signature, he would supply to F. H. That was that.

The reasons why a person of Prince's extreme intellectual honesty and extreme scruples about fact might feel that way are obvious and command respect. But how can a committee function when its members refuse to make any attempt to agree upon what has happened in their presence, or under what conditions? Nobody was asking Prince to agree to anything that he did not accept, or to accept anything in advance. All that was desired was that he join the rest of the committee in setting down, in black and white, a statement of the seance action. There would have been ample opportunity for discussion between the individual members, and failure to attain unanimity on any question would have left its mark in the text of the records.

After getting his own record fixed up on these three evenings, Prince made a secret of it. One would have thought that he would feel obliged to record, with the committee's secretary, any observations which he might make in the committee's service. No such necessity ever occurred to him, nor any necessity for exchanging views with his colleagues. He *did* promise, when I asked for it, to supply me with a copy or a

summary of his notes, I am not sure which; this promise he forgot; and when I reminded him of it he denied ever having passed it. He never handed to me, or to anybody else on behalf of the committee, any statement of what he had experienced on these three evenings in May.

Ultimately certain facts became known which made this omission as bad in effect as it had been in theory. The episode of page 241, when the curtain pole pivoted against Prince while its other end waved in air, he failed to remember that night when he got his pen in hand. I discovered, weeks later, quite by accident, that this incident had no part in his record or his recollection of the seance; he then denied that it had occurred and refused to discuss the matter further. I may say that this item is in the committee record, signed by Carrington and myself, and that it stands out very clearly even today in the memories of other sitters.

Again, when (page 376) the ukulele went into Prince's lap and against his chest, he felt, not alone the ukulele, but something else which might have been the medium's foot carrying the ukulele, and might equally have been of psychic character. He had no theory what this additional contact came from, and attempted no further observations directed toward answering the question. His state of mind is therefore that he doesn't know that it *wasn't* her foot, and hence that the ukulele manipulation means nothing. But this very important reservation he concealed from his colleagues, permitting them to assume that he had told the whole story when, during the seance, he reported the behavior of the ukulele.

Prince's failure to recognize the existence of the committee in this vital matter of the records would be excusable if his status in the room was that of an informal guest. But he was in fact actually a temporary adjunct to the subcommittee. On two of these three evenings he was assigned, and accepted, a position of control at the medium's left—a place which would not be assigned any informal guest. On the remaining occa-

sion, McDougall and I were at her either side, and we put Prince in the next most important place—at F. H.'s right. He was very peevish about having been thus set off in what he characterized as a remote quarter; one observing his behavior that evening would have had no doubts that he regarded himself as of the investigating group! This then disposes of the last chance of exculpating his refusal to recognize the tie *that bound him to the committee.*

On the evening when he was on the far side of F. H. we had the very striking disruption of the cabinet described on page 305. Prince insists that he was in no wise offended about his position on the far side of the circle; that his subsequent conduct toward this episode arose merely out of the abstract impossibility of his giving testimony about a phenomenon that occurs in one place when he is in another. Undoubtedly he believes this; but he forgets that at the time he was so fretful that he precipitated a violent argument with Comstock over a triviality which should have gone unnoticed; and that in the course of this argument he threatened to leave the premises and never come back.

With regard to the cabinet disruption, Prince at the time said that he was so distant from the theater of action that, so far as his own knowledge was concerned, he couldn't say what had occurred. Later, in print, he said that the episode was of no evidential value to him because he was "unfortunately so placed as to be unable to judge of the surrounding circumstances." Again, he refers to McDougall's and my reports of control with the remark: "of course I know nothing of that."

Now all these statements by Prince are literally true, if he be present as an individual. But he is there as a committee member. He may "know nothing of that"; but the committee through McDougall knows something of it, and Prince is of the committee. A single person cannot control all sources of fraud and error in the room; one must therefore decide that *there are those present with whom one can act in concert.* In

Prince's case, the identity of those with whom he could, and must, act in concert was fully determined by the committee membership. He must be prepared to add their observations to his own, as a basis for the formation of conclusions; else he is wasting his own time, that of the psychic, that of his colleagues. When McDougall makes statements of control and phenomena in the form of absolute facts, if Prince is not prepared to accept these statements, I must say of him what I said of Houdini. He must object *before* the seance to McDougall's presence on this major locus of control and point out *then* that phenomena which depend for their validity upon McDougall's control and reporting mean nothing to him. He can't be an individual and a committeeman, both; he must choose between the two.

Prince's attitude of extreme individualism took one extraordinary aspect. Comstock had made many contributions to the case—abstract and concrete ideas, inventions of phenomena and apparatus and procedures, etc. McDougall can be visualized as making a contribution when, after an apparently successful seance, he *tells* exactly what element of finality his perfervid imagination can conjure up as having been lacking. Even Houdini makes a contribution when he supplies apparatus which, if honestly made and used, would bar fraud by the medium. But Prince supplies no apparatus, no ideas, no procedures, no objections even, until they are wrung from him. He plays a rôle, not of scientist who is to participate in the phenomena and help make the investigation, but merely that of super-observer, who has only to see and hand down judgment. If he were a physicist, I suppose he would refuse to build a circuit for the current to flow through or meters to measure it, leaving it to the electric force to solve spontaneously his problems of observation and demonstration. He comes into the seance room with no other thought and no other program than: "Well, let's see what you have."

With Prince's departure from these three sittings, peace

descended upon the subcommittee, and reigned until June 20, the publication date of the *Scientific American* for July. Then mischief of all sorts broke loose, and remained loose permanently.

The committee members had felt that nothing should be published until the case was closed—until the subcommittee had reported and the full committee had reached a verdict. From the scientific side I sympathized with this desire. But the business and editorial staffs of the *Scientific American* felt that the story would be a long one at best, stretching through numerous issues; and that if we waited thus to begin it, the climax would come only after the story was cold. We did not then know, of course, that if we waited thus to begin it, the beginning as well as the climax would never be reached. But my journalistic colleagues were very keen to find some way in which we could tell our readers of the committee's work while this was still in progress; and journalistically, I had to grant the extreme desirability of this. Our readers had some rights.

So in the *Scientific American* for July, there appeared an article by me, presenting a preliminary account of what the mediumship was claimed to comprise; and in August we had my story of the phenomena which I had seen in the committee seances of April and May. I had to be very careful to emphasize that I dealt with unfinished work. There had been no verdict, and I had at every turn to keep the question of genuineness open, so that the verdict could go either way. Knowing as I did that the mediumship was valid, this was not the easiest thing to do; but I believe it was successfully done. Had everything turned out to be fraud, there would have been nothing to retract; it would have been necessary only to tell how trickery had done the things which I had described.

Equally I had to make it plain that I spoke in no sense for the committee. I was writing purely as a journalistic

observer. Responsibility for what I said was solely mine and the *Scientific American's*. The committee could with propriety reach a verdict contradicting the facts which I had set down, and the onus for such contradiction would rest on me and on my journal. This, too, was a difficult attitude to maintain; but all would have been well, I believe, had it not been for the daily press.

We had underestimated the general interest in our work. With the appearance of these two issues, newspapers throughout the country reproduced large portions of my articles; and in the reproduction all distinctions between *Scientific American* and committee were lost, all sense of the unfinished character of the work was thrown overboard. Headlines shrieked across the country that Margery had baffled the scientists and was about to win our prize.

Comstock, McDougall and Carrington, the subcommittee members involved, remained unaffected by this barrage of publicity. Houdini and Prince, on the other hand, reacted strongly toward it. Houdini of course took the attitude that he and we were being made ridiculous, and that it must stop; that he must be permitted to go to Boston and expose the medium. We had already arranged to send him to Boston; we did not take his outburst too seriously.

With the appearance of my second article, however, Prince entered the fray. He took the stand that he, too, was being made publicly ridiculous. He was also being privately harassed by letters from people whom he could not ignore, some chiding him for undue credulity seen in my articles, others blaming him for the delay in awarding the prize after the obvious indications of validity which they thought to see in these articles. Between the two fires, Prince rather lost his usual good judgment. It would have been easy enough to get a correcting statement printed, showing that responsibility for publication was with the *Scientific American*, and that for the conduct of the case with the subcommittee. It would have been equally

easy to deal with Prince's correspondents privately. But Prince would not have it that way. As always, his way was the only way to which he would listen. He had decided for himself that the proper remedy lay in the discontinuance of the *Scientific American* articles until after the committee was through with the case. The only alternative to this which he would consider was the immediate acceptance of his resignation.

The thing was threshed out in conference between Munn, Houdini, and Prince immediately after Houdini's return from Boston in July. Houdini and Prince formed a sort of alliance here, and Houdini declared that if Prince withdrew from the committee he would follow. We should have regarded neither event as a calamity, had it not been that the general public's estimate of the committee's ability revolved at the time rather largely about these two names. We feared that their simultaneous withdrawal would be rather generally construed as a stripping down of the committee to a membership which could be depended upon for a more favorable consideration of the Margery case than would be given by the original full committee; we feared that this action might even be taken to have been a deliberate one on the part of the *Scientific American* or of the remaining committee members. So we gave the desired assurance; and we withdrew from the September issue, then about to go to press, a third article, describing the events of Chapters XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVI and XL of the present volume.

The exact details of the Houdini-Prince alliance have never been clear to me. It is, to say the least, an extraordinary partnership. Prince's summary of his three May sittings was that nothing had been done in his presence "the possible normal explanation for which was not immediately clear" to him; with the single exception of the cabinet episode of page 305, the possible supernormal character of which he could apparently neither accept nor discuss because of the "unfortunate" fact

that it happened under the immediate control of somebody other than himself. Houdini must have believed that Prince took the entire mediumship to be fraudulent, else he would neither have given Prince his confidence as he did, nor omitted Prince so conspicuously from his list of spies, confederates and incompetent investigators. From what I heard Prince say at this period it was my judgment, too, that he took the case to be presumably fraudulent; certainly he displayed very much keener interest in observations pointing toward the possibility of fraud than in those looking in the other direction. Whatever the philosophy of the situation as it existed in their two minds, Houdini and Prince worked together at this period to rush the case to a conclusion.

The decent and orderly way to do this, of course, would have been to get some sort of a vote. Lack of confidence in the subcommittee, instructions to the subcommittee to report, or something of the sort—Carrington's vote could have been added to those of Houdini and Prince on numerous propositions of this character, after which the full committee could legally and in due form have proceeded with the case just as fast as it wanted to. But nothing of the sort was attempted or even discussed. Houdini and Prince simply constituted themselves the mouthpieces of the committee, and proceeded to function, to their own satisfaction, as such. They got together, agreed on a program, and jammed it through as far as they were able. With the policy of the subcommittee they were both entirely out of sympathy; so they calmly ignored the existence of this body. They took possession of the case, throwing the subcommittee overboard, and arranging for the August sittings described in Chapter XLIX. No slightest pretense of committee procedure was made; Houdini and Prince had simply taken the bit in their teeth. They were going to sit, in August, with such of the other members as chose to attend; they were going to slam the case through to a verdict, then and there.

These self-constituted dictators to the committee got

away with some things; with others they were less successful. Thus, they decided that they didn't want to go to Boston; so they caused a letter to be written to F. H., in the committee's name, demanding that the proposed final sittings be held in New York. But F. H. in reply politely asked which members of the committee constituted the majority that had dictated this demand; and he was sufficiently in touch, himself, with a majority of the membership to know that this question could not be answered. He pointed out that from the scientific viewpoint, strange premises in Boston came to exactly the same thing as strange premises in New York; and he showed admirable cause why Margery could not at that time go to New York. The volunteer managers of the committee thereupon decided that they would have to go to Boston.

When they got there, the board of volunteer managers was reduced to one member. Houdini simply ran the sittings to suit himself. Comstock appeared to be afraid to protest against Houdini's high-handed methods—and, indeed, for one who does not like fighting for fighting's sake, opposing Houdini's desires is no holiday job. Prince, however, is no more afraid of Houdini than he is of anything else—which is to say, he is not at all afraid of him. His failure to protest against any of the things that Houdini did must be laid either to indifference, or to actual sympathy with Houdini's program.

My position as secretary to the committee was fast becoming an untenable one, in view of the actions which I was being instructed by Prince and Houdini to take, in the committee's name, but which I knew did not represent the sense of a majority of the membership. And the matter was made worse when Houdini began to broadcast his charges against me. Had I been a voting member, of course, I should have insisted upon *fighting this issue out to an open finish*. The impropriety of the secretary's engaging in such controversy with an actual member of the committee, however, was obvious. A suggestion had already been put forward by Prince, that my withdrawal

as secretary would facilitate the public distinction between the committee and the *Scientific American*. When Houdini's attitude made it necessary for me to refuse to attend further sittings with him, this suggestion was put into effect.

Houdini, of course, alleged at the time and still alleges that I was dismissed from the secretaryship at his demand and following his charges. The committee's records show that this is not true; but in pursuance of their usual conduct in Houdini's presence, the other committee members have carefully refrained from any adequate public correction of Houdini's public charges to this, and other effects against me.

F. H. had asked on what ground it was so blithely assumed that two or three sittings in August would produce finality, when scores of prior sittings had failed to do this. This question was ignored; the committee was going to produce finality, but had no clear notion how. After the seances were over, it was obvious to all save Houdini that no finality had been reached; but the *Scientific American* now stepped in, with the reminder that it had some rights, and with an ultimatum designed to protect them.

The *Scientific American* had been forced to discontinue a series of articles in which its readers had been known to be greatly interested; there was no telling when it might resume these. In the meantime, to bring the matter to a decent and orderly recess in its readers' eyes, it demanded a statement from the committee; or if, as was presumably the case, no such statement could be agreed upon, then individual statements from the individual members. These appeared in the November, 1924, issue. Carrington pronounced the mediumship definitely genuine and so proved; Houdini pronounced it fraudulent and so proved. Comstock said it was extremely interesting and he wanted to see more of it. Prince said, as was obviously true, that he hadn't seen enough of it to base any real judgment on; that he had no judgment, and hoped to see more of Margery's phenomena. McDougall could not be

found in time to make a statement in print, but what he has since said, in private and in a newspaper interview in response to a particularly vicious outbreak by Houdini, coincides fairly well with Comstock's statement.

Although F. H. has been in some doubt about the propriety of giving further sittings to the members of the committee until they disavow Houdini's charges and Houdini's conduct in a manner satisfactory to him, he has none the less given them opportunity to see more of the mediumship. Comstock has been so busy with his business that he has had no time to attend since August 27. Prince managed to get to Boston once, for four sittings, as indicated in Chapters LI and LII. McDougall has sat with comparative frequency since his return to college.

The fact appears to be that the committee is dead and doesn't know it. And in death, as in life, we find that it isn't a committee at all, but just five individuals, attending individually when they can, working individually and independently toward five individual conclusions. Prince, of all people, was named secretary in my place; I have yet to discover that, as such, he has taken any slightest step calculated to get the committee out of its *impasse*, or that the committee has shown the slightest sign of functioning under his administration. As a committee its disqualifications are obvious. As individuals, I think I have shown that three of its members possess fundamental disqualifications from psychic research, and that a fourth, if not quite so generally disqualified as that, ought at least to be regarded as disqualified from committee work. The committee was chosen in good faith, with the belief that it represented the best body that could be named for the purpose. With the light that we now have upon its membership, I think it is fair to ask what possible outcome could have been expected from its deliberations on a genuine mediumship, beyond the outcome here recorded.

CHAPTER LI

IMPORTANT INCIDENTS OF RECENT SITTINGS

AFTER the long digression of the last three chapters, it is a relief to get back again to a place where I can talk about Margery and her phenomena. At about the time to which we have brought the mediumship in Chapter XLVII and those immediately before it, a modification in the march of events may be sensed. It is as though Walter had decided that there was now sufficient variety, and had elected now to pursue the things which he had shown himself able to do, rather than new things. For several months, nothing intrinsically novel was attempted; but familiar phenomena were presented with vigor, in seances of brilliant character, before sitters whose very presence in many instances constitutes an event. I therefore abandon the convention of topical treatment, and in this chapter give various items from the records of the more successful sittings from July 25, down to the end of the year—the dead-line imposed upon me by the necessities of publication.

Under date of July 30 we read: "Walter whistled and talked through the megaphone, whistled and at the same time played on the ukulele under the table, whistled and played the ukulele and at the same time played on the tambourine high over the table. While this was going on, Richardson declared that he had the psychic's left hand and foot controlled, and Mrs. Richardson confirmed the grip between F. H.'s left and Margery's right hands, by shifting her own right hand, clasping F. H.'s left, over to F. H.'s other side."

Carrington was the scribe on August 3, and he calls our attention to a very significant factor. After stating where the various impedimenta stood, he says: "Various whispered

conversations took place during the sitting, as usual; but the table did not move, no lights were shown, the megaphone and ukulele were not moved, the tambourine was not moved or shaken, and the cabinet was not disturbed. These facts are important, in view of the fact that no outside control of the medium's right hand and foot was possible—only one committeeman being present. Yet these phenomena, many of which might have been produced with a free right hand or foot, were not noted. On the other hand . . ." and there follows a detailed statement of the action got from the bell-box, of which I have given the substance in Chapter XLVII.

With so much of the sitting of August 7 as has to do with the bell-box I have already dealt. After dismissing this, the record goes on:

"Lights were shown, varying in size and intensity. Some appeared to be of the usual fire-fly type, others were larger and mistier in outline. They moved about covering quite a large area, and with exceptional freedom. Both the medium's hands and both her feet were under complete control when these lights were shown, and some of them attained the elevation of the top of the cabinet.

"With both the psychic's feet in Mrs. Hemenway's lap, and both her hands held, the tambourine was picked up off the floor where it lay flat, and waved about under, on and above the table. The ukulele was picked up, placed on the table and finally pushed off into Carrington's lap. A prolonged series of very rapid movements of the tambourine and ukulele then followed. These were shaken and moved about under and above the table, placed on the table, taken off again, placed under it, placed in Mrs. Hemenway's lap, taken off and waved about, etc. The rapidity here was very striking. Mrs. Hemenway was frequently requested to 'hang on' to the tambourine, but despite her attempts to do so it [and other apparatus] was wrenched from her grasp, then played upon and moved about as before. This series of manifestations

was the most striking thing of the sort that had occurred for a number of seances."

Distinguished sitters on August 12 included Mrs. Hemenway, Margaret Deland, the novelist, and Mr. Foster Damon, Instructor in English at Harvard. After noting the arrangement, etc., the record reads:

"Walter's whistle was heard about five minutes after the sitting commenced. Much talking, through the direct whisper, was heard throughout the sitting, and as usual interpreted by F. H. Lights were seen, small but brilliant, which moved about very rapidly over a large area, moving as high as the top of the cabinet on some occasions.

"The bell-box was played upon, without the bell's being rung, however. Walter stated that the spring on the contact board had been tightened, and examination proved this to be the case. It was loosened, and replaced in the cabinet. The bell was then rung repeatedly, both hands and both feet of the medium being held at the time, first by Mrs. Deland, and afterwards by Damon. F. H.'s hands were both held by Mrs. Hemenway while the ringing was in progress.

"Various touches upon the arm, knee and leg of Damon were reported by him, while he stated that he was holding both the medium's feet and hands. Her head was located throughout by her constant talking.

"The tambourine was then lifted, shaken and placed on Mrs. Deland's lap, taken off and replaced. It was afterwards balanced on Damon's knee and again removed and played upon. The seance table was then completely overturned, so that its top rested on the floor, the four legs being in the air. This was done with great rapidity and apparent ease, though the space in which it had to turn was comparatively small.

"At one time, both hands and feet of the medium being held by the left controller, Walter spoke through the megaphone, which was evidently continuously held in the air, and afterwards dropped to the floor; at the same time, the ukulele

and the tambourine were moved about and the table was moved about the floor. A number of different manifestations were thus going on at one and the same time.

"The seance concluded with a number of short, sharp movements of the cabinet, with both hands and both feet being controlled by Damon."

(Signed) MARGARET DELAND,
HEREWARD CARRINGTON,
HARRIETT L. HEMENWAY,
S. FOSTER DAMON,
ALEX. W. CROSS,
J. FRED ADLER.

August 14 saw the presence, for the first time, of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph De Wyckoff of New York. Mr. De Wyckoff is a very successful example of the "hard-headed business man" whom a certain type of militant skeptic ranks above the scientist in observing power and critical faculties. He has accepted the mediumship *in toto* and has become a close friend of the Lime Street household. The record on this occasion reads:

"Walter taught the guests the technique of double control, De Wyckoff controlling the whole of Margery and Mrs. De Wyckoff the whole of F. H. He then rang the contact bell, and on request gave a sentence in Morse code on it. Then he lifted the tambourine high over the table, played on it merrily, and whistled through the megaphone in the back of the cabinet, all at the same time. A few dancing lights went around the circle, and there was a noisy rhythmic scraping of the ukulele on the floor. He then deposited the ukulele in the laps of both visitors, and later the megaphone."

The distinguished guest of August 16 was Alfred Gray of Buffalo, the medium's cousin and again a man of large affairs. "A few lights were shown; the tambourine, dimly illumined by psychic lights, was waved in front of Gray's face, touched him, and dropped to the floor, whence later it was

picked up and laid on his lap; the ukulele was picked up off the floor and placed on his lap, then taken away and put on the table; he was touched with a rose from the table, on hands and face; and there were numerous psychic touches." A very similar performance was given the next night, Gray again being present.

The De Wyckoffs were present on the nineteenth and twentieth, and got good bell-ringing and other episodes. On the latter date, under "double control" from Margery's left and F. H.'s right, the megaphone was held in air and Walter whistled while the bell-box was operated. On the twenty-first, in addition to the De Wyckoffs, there were present Mrs. R. A. Franks, of Llewellynn Park, N. J., and her son, introduced by me. A remarkable seance calls for substantial reproduction from the record:

"The first physical thing noted was incredibly rapid lifting of the illuminated megaphone from the floor at Margery's right to the table top, silently. Control was perfect. Later, in two periods, Walter produced lights of several shapes and sizes, on the floor, on the table, up in the air and all through the cabinet. [This was announced as especially for Mrs. Franks, who, though a Spiritualist for many years, had never seen any physical phenomena.] He put the ukulele in De Wyckoff's lap and later in Mrs. De Wyckoff's. He touched them all and pulled Goodall's trouser leg.

"After planning it out in detail, Walter signalled with the word 'control' for everyone to cover his neighbor's mouth with a clasped hand; this was done, the circle remaining unbroken. Then over in the northeast corner of the room, as promised by Walter, John whistled faintly but distinctly two bars of "Souvenir." Everyone heard it.

"A definite effort at materialization was made in the person of Sadie, a friend of Mrs. De Wyckoff. Walter said: 'John will whistle and Sadie will speak and try to show herself.' F. H. felt something the length and shape of a forearm

sweep across his face and an instant later Mrs. De Wyckoff felt the same. Then shortly, while F. H. was speaking, his breath was thrown back at him as though he were talking up close to the side of a person's body. Then Mrs. De Wyckoff felt something like a body leaning against her. The whole experience was as though a body had passed out from the cabinet. Control was perfect. Then the attention of all was attracted to a very bright luminous spot about the middle of the mantel, about the shape and size of a human face. Contrary to instructions, Margery cried out to call attention to it, this directing everybody's concentrated gaze on it; whereupon it promptly faded out.

"Walter then did some of his triple stunts: holding the megaphone, whistling or singing through it, playing the tambourine high in air or ringing the bell; double control constant. Then he stopped the Victrola twice, once in red light and again with the ceiling light burning as well as the side light. In the dark again he gave a wonderful exhibition of lights everywhere."

Among the sitters on August 30 were a prominent Presbyterian minister and professor, whom I shall call Dr. Haviland because mention of his real name might embarrass him; and Mr. A. F. Bartlett of St. Petersburg, Fla. The latter gentleman got advice similar to that which Walter had been giving liberally to De Wyckoff, Mrs. Franks, et al: he must be careful in his financial dealings with mediums, never to put them under obligation to him; he must never make them gifts—in particular he mustn't bring the present psychic gifts. Physical phenomena of a high order are suggested by the record, but this is one of the instances where F. H. has confined his attention almost wholly to the content of Walter's remarks.

On September 3, Walter asked Adler if he wished the Victrola stopped; and in response to Adler's yes, it was instantly halted. The demonstration was repeated in red light,

and this time was accompanied by a Walter whistle from the region of the machine. "Next he did some wonderful work with the luminous megaphone [a band about an inch wide being painted around the outside of both ends]. He waved it all over the cabinet, over the table, put it on Adler's head, on F. H.'s head; and all the while rang the bell in time with the emphasis which he desired to put on his remarks."

"Dr. Haviland" and his wife were again present on September 4. "Walter talked and whistled through the megaphone, used the tambourine and bell, used the lighted megaphone, tipped over the cabinet—all under 'double control.' He brought down the illuminated curtain pole and moved it freely everywhere. It was thought that the light on the ends might be too bright, so a handkerchief was hung over each end. Walter then approached the end where the light was thus shining through the handkerchief, and his black terminal could be seen eclipsing the light; then he removed the handkerchief. He repeated this seven times, on request."

Mr. Henry Parsons, the distinguished engineer, introduced by Mrs. Deland, was in the circle at Margery's left on September 5. "Walter worked the tambourine in mid-air, whistled and rang the bell, all at the same time; then he laid the tambourine in Parson's lap. Next he held the painted megaphone at F. H.'s mouth, so he could the better tell the tale of Houdini's conduct. Then he held it at Parson's mouth with a strong pressure. All these phenomena took place under "double control" and hence were much more than usually impressive, as seen from Parson's seat.

For old friends on the seventh, Walter gave a performance "second to none he had ever offered. It consisted in manipulation of the ukulele, depositing it in any lap; manipulation of the tambourine, apparently taking great delight in asking us where it was and then shaking it in an entirely different place, to show that he can move it about without noise; using the lighted megaphone to speak through at any and all posi-

tions in the cabinet and over the table; holding then the small end to the mouths successively of Stewart, F. H. and Brown, for each to speak through; finally depositing it where asked to by Stewart. He rang the bell by contact from the ukulele, spelling out Morse code thus, and whistling the while. Then he tipped over the cabinet. Practically all this was under double control conditions," as was so often the case at this period.

September 13 saw a Victrola stoppage, apparently accidental so far as Walter was concerned; and good movement of tambourine and ukulele—the one was moved out from beneath the other, for instance. For the fourteenth we read: "He held the dark megaphone and talked through it, rang the bell, and waved the lighted megaphone about—all at once. He ruffled and pulled Stewart's and F. H.'s hair; put the lighted megaphone on three heads; touched Brown, Mrs. Stewart and Margery each on the leg, as by a mouse. With red light on he stopped the Victrola three separate times, once with a display of sparks and flashes in the region of the back of the phonograph unit, near the electric motor." Again on the fifteenth, several incidents appear to have been noteworthy—three red light haltings of the Victrola, touches on the shoulder and knee of the sitter next to Margery with very definite pressure, etc.

The circle on the seventeenth included, in addition to Mrs. Gray, other friends and relatives from Buffalo, of material standing equal to Gray's. "We had put a luminous T on the tambourine and U on the ukulele; Walter worked with both these and with both megaphones. He produced triple and quadruple phenomena and *twice his voice and Margery's overlapped*. Some luminous paint came off the ukulele on Margery's trousers, whereupon Walter laid his dark terminal off and on the spot repeatedly, eclipsing it and giving Shuttleworth the sensation of a hand on his trousers. Mrs. Shuttleworth received many touches, and the ukulele was put in her hands.

The lighted megaphone was held to the mouths of both these sitters."

Next night, with the Buffalo group again present, materialization was once more attempted, proceeding about as far as it had on August 21. "We soon observed a nebulous luminosity about two feet high and eight inches wide, rising above the table, the upper end being very bright. This was visible to all; from time to time it took excursions towards the Shuttleworths and Mrs. Gray." Earlier, with a luminous spot on Shuttleworth's trousers, this time by intent, the eclipsing touches of the night before were duplicated. A soft hand was the simile here employed by the recipient.

The faithful scales were put before Walter here; and "with the pans loaded three weights east and one west, he worked them violently in the dark and then in red light, swinging and balancing them perfectly, despite the uneven loads. Under instructions, Mink took the west pan off while they were balancing, examining it and the support freely; then he put it back, and equilibrium was restored."

The third and final contact of the Buffalo group with Walter, on September 19, brought one of the best sittings ever recorded. "Walter came through at once, eclipsing the luminous cross on Shuttleworth's trousers, and giving merry whistles. There shortly appeared a nebulous luminosity, two feet high, eight inches thick, over the table; which went first to Mrs. Shuttleworth, then to Mrs. Gray, back and forth between them, and into the cabinet. With it came a new voice speaking as Mrs. Gray's mother. The same light picked up a rose from the table and deposited it in Mrs. Gray's lap, then one in Mrs. Shuttleworth's. As we watched the upper end of this luminosity it appeared to several to take on the semblance of a human face—not definite, but as near to a face as some of the pictures in Schrenck-Notzing's book. When this presence had disappeared into the rear of the cabinet, there came another smaller but brighter light, again re-

sembling a face. This went over toward Shuttleworth and touched him three times on the shoulder; then a new voice spoke as that of his mother. The apparition kept touching him three times, repeating this four times three. Then a third but still smaller and definitely brighter ball of light came, eight inches in diameter; and in it, the orbits and part of the nose could be distinctly seen. This went to Mink, and was taken for his father.

"Walter did every trick at its best with tambourine, ukulele and lighted megaphone. The ukulele in particular he lifted without a fumble, three feet above the top of the scales, which were on the table; and he made it career all through the air. Partly through his own manipulation of the weights and partly through that of F. H. a four-to-one load was established on the scale-pans; then in red light he balanced and swung the pans with perfect smoothness. With adequate warning, he tipped the cabinet over, crashing. All phenomena were done under double control," and all, on this as the two preceding nights, have the enthusiastic signed endorsement of the sitters, drawn up and forwarded to F. H. after their return home. The Victrola was twice stopped in red light, the record adds as an afterthought.

Messrs. T. A. Scott and F. E. Parker, editors of the Boston Spiritualist journal, *Banner of Light*, were present on September 20, and had a large evening. They have recorded it in their columns; they found it extremely impressive.

From the record for September 28 we read: "After doing his usual stunts with the various instruments, putting them in laps, lifting them high and putting them down without noise, he staged a multiple stunt: holding megaphone, talking through it, holding ukulele, then using this to make the bell-box ring. He finally said: 'Now we will ring the bell-box on the floor with the double control, and the Kid's feet in the lap at her left; then I will do that with each of you in succession, sitting in the left chair. Put the box carefully on the

floor; don't hit the cabinet when you do so and don't stir things up.' This was done; then one after another sat in the left chair, psychic's feet in this sitter's lap, both hands held, head located. For each Walter not only rang the bell, but also for each rang it any number of times requested by the sitter." The night before, I had been present at a brilliant display of manipulation of the marked objects, several of them frequently being in air at once. The night after, Dr. Elwood Worcester, Boston's noted Episcopalian divine, was present with his son. The record indicates a "brilliant" showing without giving any particulars thereof.

I lack space to give details of all sittings held in this period; my story must therefore be of the sitters and of really brilliant incidents. Accordingly I jump to October 14, when the company included Parsons, Mrs. Deland, Mrs. Hemenway, and Mrs. Charles Sumner Bird, member of an old Boston family, introduced by Mrs. Deland. "For physical phenomena he manipulated the tambourine, ukulele, large and small megaphones and bell-box with great skill and rapidity. Partly using the big megaphone and partly no megaphone, he spoke directly into the face of Mrs. Hemenway, also of Miss Richardson. Seven times he spoke directly into the faces of these sitters furthest from the psychic, his words not being audible to F. H. though plain to them. He also whistled very loudly in this distant part of the circle and then high in air, repeating again and again with apparent ease."

Late in October, Canon George William Douglas of New York was present for several sittings with Prince and other notables. Nothing very good of an objective character happened on these evenings. A small circle on October 24, however, after the departure of these guests, got a brilliant showing. "Conant had his camera with the quartz lens all set, and Walter became much interested in it. Then the big megaphone, the small megaphone and the ukulele all went up in the air over Margery's head in the cabinet, and there rattled

and crashed about. Walter's voice was heard: 'That's right; now hold it, you boys. Steady. Oh, no good!' as everything crashed. He then asked us to put the playthings on the table, whereupon he picked them up again and seemed to be trying to construct something with them. All crashed again, apparently to the great disgust of Walter, who proceeded to condemn his assistants. Next the ukulele went up alone, apparently outside the west wing of the cabinet; and there it hung for ten minutes over Adler's head. Then Walter told Conant to shoot the flashlight; after which the ukulele stayed in its position. Walter said: 'John is stunned; he doesn't know enough to let go.' In about a minute the ukulele fell."

The sitting of November 12 was notable for the character of the psychic contacts obtained. There were other large items, but I describe only this one feature, quoting a bit brokenly from the record. "He then touched Murray on the back of his hand. Walter said to F. H.: 'Put your hand on the Kid's knee and I may let you feel something.' This was done and F. H. felt on the back of his hand a cold, yielding touch. The experiment was repeated for the benefit of all sitters. Then Walter told F. H. to put his hand, palm up, on Margery's knee; that he might feel an ectoplasmic terminal and squeeze it gently. F. H. did as suggested, whereupon there was put in his hand a more or less conical mass, half an inch wide at its tip, rapidly getting wider, up to about an inch and a quarter where it left F. H.'s hand. This mass was ice cold, somewhat rough on the surface, and yielded slightly as a rubber eraser might do. This was repeated with Murray and Brown. When Brown relinquished his hold Walter said: 'Hey, don't keep any of that! You've got some there. Put it back on the table. I'm responsible for every bit of it. I must have it back.' *If Brown had any, he was frankly unaware of the fact.*" At another date, under similar circumstances, Conant was required by Walter to scrape his hand carefully, and he stated

that through this process he recovered and put down on the table at Walter's command, something that acted much like the fine inner membrane of an egg.

After the very brilliant bell-box performance of November 23, described in the next chapter, other action was got that is worth chronicling. "The second part of the sitting consisted in work with the lighted megaphone such as we have never seen before. Lights were seen twice, over Donnell's head. Walter said, 'Break the circle; too much force here.' Then after a while, 'Take the top off this cabinet; too much force. Donnell is some psychic. Oh, what I could do with a male psychic!'

"Then the lighted megaphone was lifted from Margery's right, on the floor, three times, up to the level of her head and back, during double control of her and F. H. Then with greatest rapidity it swung around outside the west wing of the cabinet, where it was held high against the wing, visible only to Arkin; and it beat a long tattoo on the cabinet. Then it swung completely to the back and outside of the cabinet, near the doorway, and there repeated the tattoo from a position of invisibility to all the sitters. Then it came around the outside of the east wing and was there visible to F. H., Donnell and Adler. It traveled up and down three times the full length of the wing, then repeated the tattoo on the wing. It was then thrown behind F. H.'s chair and was placed by him, at Walter's request, in the cabinet. Then it suddenly came up in front of the psychic, went over behind her to a position in the cabinet behind the lower part of her chair; and there it beat a violent tattoo, visible to all save Margery."

A notable company was present on November 28. Mrs. Hemenway and the lady of my own surname were again present; and they brought Mrs. Margaret Cameron (Lewis), author and psychic, together with Mrs. Bagley, mother of the control "Frederick" of Mrs. Cameron's "Seven Purposes." Tambourine, ukulele and megaphones were freely manipulated, while Walter talked. The megaphone in particular displayed

unprecedented range—some of the sitters were confident that it reached the ceiling. It certainly went outside the cabinet to a degree seldom, if ever, before approached. This suggests my own experience of December 30, when what was apparently the megaphone descended gently upon the top of my head while I was sitting wholly outside the cabinet at the side, and well back.

The presence of Donnell, who is psychic enough to be in demand by friends of Margery who wish to start a circle of their own, may have been in part responsible for what took place on December 3. "Conant was sent out to fill his flash-gun. While he was out the red light was turned on for ten seconds. The small megaphone was seen about a foot above Margery's head, floating free and in motion, more or less 'swimming' like a fish, a motion so sinuous as to suggest strongly the use of some such word as 'floating.' This was repeated for periods of ten, five and five seconds, during one of which, under Walter's instructions, a flashlight was taken."

During early December, Margery was for several days in New York, and gave two sittings at which were present the De Wyckoffs (her hosts), Munn, and others. No detailed records are available, but several sitters endorse Margery's report that excellent action was had. This recalls that in late September, Margery was induced, while in New York, to sit in Munn's apartment. I have conflicting oral versions from several sitters; it is admitted that Walter spoke, and that other physical effects, table levitation in particular, were obtained. So we again have evidence that the mediumship is not a function of Lime Street. This element was greatly strengthened during Christmas week, when Margery and F. H., visiting the Buffalo relatives, gave three sittings in three days, in Buffalo and Niagara Falls, to a total of sixty-four sitters. All three were brilliant successes, as attested by letters from several present; but no detailed record exists, so I cannot say what happened.



TWO ACTION PICTURES OF LATE 1924 SEANCES

Above: taken in darkness on November 12; see page 479. *Below:* taken in red light, December 3; see page 468.

CHAPTER LII

THE BELL-BOX BRINGS A CLIMAX IN RED LIGHT

As described in detail in Chapter XLVII, and more sketchily as of later date in Chapter LI, Walter had been making very much of a go of the bell-box. Indeed, on the strength of what he had seen with it, Carrington made definite pronouncement of genuineness and withdrew from further consideration of the case—so far as his membership on the committee was concerned, it was finished. But Walter had only begun. He gave the first indication of what was to come on August 17. The record does not indicate just how or on what initiative the bell-box and the red light were brought together. All we find recorded is: "During the ten-minute period for which Walter had said he would be absent, tapping was heard on the table, and the recollection of some sitters is that the bell-box, standing on the table, was rung. Then on his return, during three periods of red light ranging in intensity from half to three-quarters (approximately) of the full strength permitted by the rheostat, the bell-box was each time rung for quite an appreciable number of seconds. The fourth attempt in full red light was a failure. *The spring flap was seen by all to move up and down, corresponding to the action of the bell.*"

Two nights later, on August 19, Walter rang the bell many times in red light, the illumination covering the ringing from beginning to end; and he rang any number of long or short peals asked for by the sitters, still in red light. Here was something far more promising than the scales had ever been, for, on a second attempt, Walter was able to produce the entire episode in light, the darkness coming wholly between episodes rather than overlapping them as had always been the case with the scales.

"Walter rang the bell on the table in red light" on August 30, "in response to a request for seven rings, this request being made after the red light was put on." This constituted an advance; on the nineteenth he had taken the stand that his preparation in darkness must involve knowledge of what he would be asked to do. Then the next mention of bell-ringing in red light falls on September 5, in the presence of Parsons, who gave the orders and watched them filled. On September 13, Mrs. Hemenway was present when "Walter rang the bell in red light and a given number of times, on request, after the light went on." On the seventeenth, the Buffalo group all saw the same thing; "the bell-box was rung in red light, ringing whatever was desired in response to a wish in red light from each member of the circle."

Worcester was present on September 29, and saw the bell ring in red light, a given number of rings, which was dictated after the light came on. It was arranged that he and McDougall should have a series of sittings aimed at this manifestation. On October 3, with McDougall and Mrs. McDougall in control of all possible points of fraud, the bell rang repeatedly in the dark, giving a demonstration equal to any on which Carrington made his final decision; but it did not, on that evening, operate in the light.

With a larger but more accustomed group on October 17, "Walter rang the bell in the dark several times, then directed Conant to try a flashlight of the bell while it was ringing in red light. Then he expressed a desire to do it again. 'Examine the box thoroughly, then in red light I will ring the bell three times, and while it is ringing let Conant shoot his flashlight.' This was done; the red light was turned on, the bell rang, and the flash apparently went off during the second ringing. But in spite of the brilliant white light thus produced momentarily, Walter still rang his third peal. He then demanded that the box be examined again, and this was done."

Among those exposed to the red-light ringing of the bell-

box on October 18, were Mr. and Mrs. Tilney, brother-in-law and sister of Munn; also Judge and Mrs. Newhall of Connecticut. "Walter had Judge Newhall examine the box thoroughly; then Tilney put it on the floor at Margery's left and under 'double control' it rang, giving long and short peals as asked for by the Tilneys. Then it was put back on the table (as always for red-light ringing), and examined afresh by the Judge. Then in red light it rang. Next after that, the red light being turned on, Walter rang the bell a number of long and short peals asked for by the Judge, the request being spoken after the light went on. Then he did the same for Mrs. Tilney." Several strange sitters got the same demonstration on the nineteenth.

Prince was in Boston on October 21, and for three evenings sat with Worcester and others. They got a little bell-ringing, but, only in darkness, and nothing at all conclusive. Walter finally, on the third night, volunteered to try it in the daylight next day, and the hour of two o'clock was set. All the psychic's friends regarded this as lunacy, and were greatly worried about the prospects of failure, and the consequences on Prince's attitude toward the mediumship. F. H. permitted the sitting to be held against his better judgment.

There exists a statement dictated by Margery herself and one mailed by Prince to F. H. The latter is not released for publication. I must therefore use the former, with the remark that while each naturally records details which the other omits, the two statements agree very well in every respect, and contradict each other not at all; save that one's impression from Margery's would be that the bell rang quite lengthy peals, while from Prince's one would infer that it rang very short.

"Margery and Prince only participants. Sitting started 2.30 p.m. Position, medium and Prince facing each other on chairs, with no table between. Box in Prince's lap.

"Control: both her feet on his feet, both hands held by

him throughout. Box on his lap, explored several times by him; and lap of medium also searched.

"Light conditions: Front curtains drawn, bedroom door open. Sun shining into hall, dial of clock visible at six feet. Prince arranged light conditions without suggestion from medium and declared himself satisfied with them. [Prince tells me that Margery made no suggestions and interfered in no way in anything.]

"In five minutes medium became very chilled and Prince covered her hands to warm them, pulling robes about her." [Margery here describes certain vocal phenomena, partly from Walter and partly from others, which she heard but which of course Prince did not. I pass them over as of minor interest in this narrative.]

"Walter came in usual voice, saying: 'The Kid is too cold. Get a hot drink and resume.' The sitting was interrupted until 3.15. After resumption [she does not indicate how long after; Prince says it was but a short time], the bell-box suddenly rang a long peal; control the same as at beginning, with medium's head and shoulders perfectly visible. Prince explored box again, apparently without finding anything suspicious. After an interval of five minutes Walter rang the bell again, at about 4.00 p.m. [Obviously there is something wrong with the timing here.] Prince immediately took box to bedroom with him, and experimented with it, finding nothing suspicious. He said [this is of course Margery's quotation]:

"I know of no way the bell could have been rung. But I am not an electrician and I should like a statement from Comstock or Conant whether in any way a short circuit could be made that would ring it at intervals."

Prince showed by this remark, made after he had looked over the inside of the box, that he has less electrical knowledge than I should suppose would be necessary for one in his position. I will testify categorically that with the box in the condition in which I have always found it there is no possi-

bility of internal short-circuiting while the box remains locked; Conant did so testily and F. H. has his statement.

The occasion ended with a touch of comedy. Prince, apparently thinking out loud, said something about the possibility of an apparatus concealed under Margery's gown. Either he volunteered or she wrung from him the admission that use of such apparatus to ring the bell would perforate the fabric. So she peeled off the gown and threw it at his metaphorical head, insisting that he examine it against the light and give it a clean bill of health. This he did.

Prince has told me, in confidence, the reservations which he feels that he must hold against the certain genuineness of this episode. In my judgment, it would not take a great deal of this bell-ringing to bring a verdict of genuineness from him; for every reservation which he holds has in my presence been met in thoroughly clean-cut fashion, and I am confident would be similarly met in his. But for the moment he asks for an effort to get phenomena under conditions which F. H. fears might not work out, or might be, if they did work out, injurious to the psychic's health. They cannot get together; and Prince takes the stand that his time is too crowded to permit him to go to Boston, unless he has assurance in advance of the conditions under which the sitting will be held. In my judgment they are both wrong. F. H. could safely promise an attempt at sitting under the conditions which Prince asks; and equally, Prince could well afford, in the present stage of the mediumship, to run over for a week-end on the chance that what has happened with dozens of sitters would happen with him. He, rather than F. H., is the loser through the deadlock; so he is the one who ought to break it.

Damon and his two academic colleagues, Messrs. Hillyer and Code, were present on October 25, when Walter "rang the bell-box in red light with all hands visible above the table, after which the new sitters were allowed to examine the box, also in the same period of red light." This is something else

to which Walter never came with the scales. Examination of the box during the seance, of course, implies merely external search for wires, etc., and not an opening up and inspection of the internal arrangements such as is given before sitting down.

From the signed statement by McDougall and Worcester for October 28, I quote: "The bell-box began to ring in the dark; under instructions from Walter we turned on the red light, full strength. McDougall put his left hand all around the box and his arm over the top while it was ringing; Worcester did the same. During this time the ringing was momentarily intermitted; then came a dark period. During the ringing all eight hands were raised above the table and were visible to all. Foot control of Margery and F. H. was maintained throughout the sitting, in spite of its apparently small pertinence.

"After five minutes for relaxation, the bell again began to ring in the dark; then in the full red light as this was turned on. Both observers again put hands and arms freely over and around the box. Then Worcester raised the box sixteen inches off the table, so that all could see under it; and it kept on ringing. McDougall explored freely between the table and the lifted bell-box. The bell rang steadily through all this and into the ensuing dark period. It then stopped *on request*.

"Bell-box, cabinet, table, table-legs, Margery's extremities, were all examined by McDougall and Worcester to their satisfaction. A closed hoop was passed completely over and under the table by McDougall."

At about this time, McDougall objected to certain features of the box design. The spring that held the two boards apart was a spiral affair; and if permitted to expand to its full limit it was likely to kick the top board out of its way and then fly clear off its mounting. This was prevented by tacking a strip of velvet across the sides of the boards, limit-

ing the degree to which these two members could separate. McDougall regarded the velvet strip as an undesirable complication; he could not feel assured that it did not add to the possibilities of fraud! So at his request it was removed for the sitting of October 30. The record here reads:

"Room searched; table and bell-box examined and table passed through loop of rope by McDougall. Margery's ankles tied together and by the same tie fastened to McDougall's right ankle. Victrola almost at once slowed, varying in speed almost to complete stopping; this continued throughout."

"9.25. Bell-box rung in the dark."

"9.38. Bell-box began ringing in the dark. Red light was turned on, full strength. McDougall and Worcester examined all around and over the box, finding nothing. Worcester then picked it up, still ringing, and carried it seventy-eight inches northwest from its usual position on the table, and fifty-six inches above the floor. His body was between the box and the table, and he studied it constantly. It continued to ring. It was put back on the table, still ringing, and so rang into the dark period. *Then, on request, it stopped.*"

With the spring displaced, the top board is heavy enough to close the contact by its own weight, and to keep the bell ringing permanently. That it stopped here proves that the spring was still in place. But F. H. had told McDougall, in protest against the removal of the velvet, that the spring would sooner or later pop out; and the accident occurred after this entry, obviously, for we now read:

"9.50. Bell started ringing again in the dark, light was turned on, ringing continued, and it was observed that the spring had come out of place.

"10.08. Sitting closed. Bell-box examined by McDougall and Worcester. Knife-blade was forced through the mobile contact-top, to eliminate the possibility of a metal plate, concealed within. During the ringing in the dark, Worcester saw

the spark at the contact plate, showing that the ringing was accomplished by that contact."

If I point out the futility of the test here employed to exclude magnets, it will be understood that I have myself often applied the valid test against this. One simply passes a magnet thoroughly over the surface, and verifies that it sticks nowhere; one has then tested the entire surface and not mere selected points thereof.

After this or some other sitting in which he saw the bell ring while being carried about the room, McDougall was pressed for some definite reason why he would not grant the psychic character of the phenomenon. He had absolutely no suggestion to offer how it might have been done fraudulently; he was literally bankrupt here. I regard the only courses open at this juncture to be a clean-cut verdict of genuineness or a clean-cut admission of lack of confidence in one's ability to deal with the problem. McDougall sought a middle course by the plea that he could not so summarily overthrow the philosophy of a lifetime. If his preconceived philosophy is dearer to him than his observed facts, he ought to stay out of the seance room, where one's main business is to expose one's self to heavy risks of philosophic overturn.

The disordered spring, it will be noted, affected but the final episode here. Before the next sitting the spiral spring was replaced by a strip spring, screwed down at one end as photographed, and requiring no snubber to prevent the accident which had happened to the spiral one. But McDougall, at a later date, when newspaper interest in the case was at fever heat, found it necessary to explain why he had not pronounced the case genuine. Among the things of questionable expediency which he said was a reference to the "broken" spring. He was not content with mentioning this very special and meaningless incident (for which he himself was responsible); he actually coupled it with his remark about overturning the philosophy of a lifetime, in a way which would easily lead a reader to infer



FURTHER VIEWS OF THE HAUNTED BELL-BOX

Above: the daylight exposure of November 1, 1924; see page 477. *Below:* similar effect obtained in the service room, on date not recorded. Note that all the human hands in the vicinity of the bell-box are accounted for, yet there appears an extra white hand on top of this.

that the only time he ever saw an otherwise valid performance with the bell-box, the spring was broken. As an obvious and easily predictable result, the incident was seized upon by the press and by Houdini, and generalized into an explanation for all the bell-ringing; and Houdini made the most offensive statement, in a public lecture in Boston, ridiculing Worcester on the assumption that he had been prodigiously impressed as he paraded the room with a ringing bell-box and a broken spring. I regard it as altogether extraordinary that a person of McDougall's experience and standing should have spoken in a way making it so easy to mistake the very special for the wholly general.

Conant had an extraordinary experience at noon of November 1. He came to the house to take, for ultimate publication, a photograph of the bell-box. He exposed a single plate, in a sunlit room. Twice during the focussing and exposing Margery passed through the room on her household duties. On development, the box was found to be obscured by a diffused white cloud, completely blocking out its outlines, and "pouring" upward on the screen background. At the edge of this cloud is silhouetted something which is or is not a human face, just as one's personal preference lies. On the third, Conant got a chance to ask Walter what it was all about. The answer came: "I was waiting for you to ask that. This house is haunted. There are lots of us around." He credited the result obtained to John.

On November 7, there were present besides Margery and F. H., only McDougall and Worcester. For the first part of the sitting there was a complex of touches and bell-box work in the dark, the latter being recorded as sporadic, irregular ringing. Conant was in the house awaiting a call; and presently Walter sent for him, instructing that, at his signal, a flashlight should be taken of the bell-box, ringing in red light. Conant got his camera set up, then there was a bit of ringing in the dark. On Walter's instructions the red light

was turned on. McDougall requested two short rings and one long. He got his order filled, in good red light, the long ring being interrupted or irregular. The flashlight was sprung during the ringing; the bell then came to silence in the light and was examined [externally] in the same red light, without intervening darkness.

At this point McDougall, in experimenting with the bell-box, noted that the very slight weight of a pocket calendar sufficed to ring the bell, when placed centrally on the top board. After a few minutes, this weight would no longer depress the board into contact position, even when placed as high as possible on the board to increase its leverage. The box was brought downstairs; at this time, a certain moderately heavy book would ring the bell, when placed with its front edge half way up the incline of the top board. After some thirty minutes the apparatus was tested again; and this same book had to be put at the extreme top of the board to force contact. This, together with the observations set down under date of December 30, suggest rather strongly that the depression of the top board is in part affected by the presence of some psychic element of added weight, which has to be slowly introduced and slowly removed.

The bell-box-in-red-light business took, on November 9, a new and altogether amazing turn. Dr. Henry Newmann, leader of the New York Ethical Culture Society, was present. "Walter rang the bell, beginning and ending in red light. The light being on, Newmann requested that it be rung two shorts and one long; this was done at once. The bell was immediately examined to show its freedom from external connections. Walter rang it again in full light and stopped. In this same period of light, Newmann then took the box up to look under it and around it; *whereupon, while it was thus held in air, Walter rang it intermittently.*"

Conant, on November 11, was permitted to take a flashlight of the bell-box, held high in air by Richardson, and

ringing. Again on the twelfth, the cameras came into play—this time with apparently supernormal results. The bell began to ring; the flash was shot; the bell continued to ring, then stopped; it was at once examined in red light. Walter had said: "This picture should show a hand and forearm in relation with the megaphone which lay on the table"; the reader may see that it did just that. Also a second megaphone, glimpsed by Adler floating in the cabinet during the flash, appeared on the plate. This picture might conservatively be alleged to have a lot of meat in it.

A second picture was taken; Walter said he would try to make visible a hand, under the flapper of the bell-box, but that he was not sure that he would succeed. He need not have been so modest, as the result shows.

Again, on the thirteenth, the bell-box rang in the dark for McDougall and Worcester, under ample control; but refused to work in the light. McDougall had wondered how he might be assured that the thing was not done by blowing on the top contact board. Walter took this occasion to laugh at the idea—justly, I think. Then he sprang a new one: "There is not a man in this room now who can ring this bell-box by any means." In the dark, under perfect double control, McDougall tried repeatedly to ring it with his chin. He located the contact board, pressed it down, and all present heard the metal contacts click together; but no bell rang. Then all at once he did it again, and it rang! "Ha, ha!" said Walter, "I was holding the hammer of the bell."

All previous experience with the bell-box was thrown into the shade on November 16. Messrs. Patten of Chicago and Costikyan of New York, both prominent merchants, were present, together with the three English instructors from Harvard. The record is unusually full:

"(1) He rang the bell beginning and ending in red light, followed by examination of the box.

"(2) He started the bell ringing in the red light, allowed

Patten to pick it up high in the air, still ringing, to put it down still ringing and then stopped it in the light. While Patten had the box up in the air, the others felt all around *them and down between psychic and box.*

"(3) Walter started the bell ringing in red light. Damon picked it up still ringing, put it on top of his head and in that position it rang intermittently, definitely starting and stopping and so continued intermittently until it was put back on the table, when it stopped.

"(4) Walter started the bell ringing in red light, allowed Costikyan to pick it up, to carry it first over to one window and then to the other, to turn his body a complete circle while he still held the ringing bell-box and to bring it back to the table still ringing, whereupon he stopped it on request.

"(5) The red light was turned on and, at the request of Patten, Walter rang two longs and three shorts, beginning and ending in the red light, followed by immediate examination of the box.

"This we consider the most marvelous and complete experiment with the bell-box that has been done." One can feel with them!

When I visited the Lime Street house on November 18, I saw the revised arrangement of the spring for the first time, and I regarded this as a distinct improvement. The guest of honor this night was Dr. R. N. Daley of New York. He, Richardson and I opened up the bell-box. I don't know what confidence they had in their own electrical knowledge, but I verified that there was no extraneous apparatus in the box and no possibility of shorting. With the velvet strip gone, I found that one could get faint, isolated tinklings by *shaking the box*; but one had to shake it very hard indeed for this, *and the result was not remotely like the seance ringing.* I drew up the record of the evening for F. H.

"Walter came through fairly promptly, and after parley in the dark, the sitting was given over to the bell-box. This



PSYCHIC EFFECTS ON THE BELL-BOX

Above: taken in darkness, November 12; see page 479. *Below:* records fail to indicate date or conditions of illumination. Both photographs show extraneous material under contact board of bell-box.

stood on the table, as usual. With control of hands announced as perfect by F. H. and Daley, no attempt at foot control, the bell rang repeatedly. I was rather puzzled to know why it sometimes sparked visibly and sometimes not, wondering whether there were here any psychic element as yet unrecognized.

"After a good deal of this in the dark, Walter instructed that red light be put on and that Daley take the box up in his hands. This he did. The light was not the full rheostat intensity, but was ample for good visibility—I should judge about eighty per cent of maximum. Daley did not move the box as freely as I should have done had I been in his place, but he lifted it perhaps two feet clear of the table and laterally toward himself until the table was not under it at all, and he moved it about some as he held it during the demonstration. He had barely got it firmly in hand, in the position described, when it started to ring. It stopped and restarted several times, rang medium and long peals while he thus held it; and finally there came a very long peal, ten seconds or more. During this peal Daley put the box back on the table, and it continued to ring, stopping only after it had been on the table and free of his contact for perhaps three or four seconds. While he held it up in air, ringing intermittently, Richardson passed his hands freely about through the space under the box and above the table.

"Light was turned off for parley with Walter. He indicated that he would ring the bell to order as it stood on the table. Light restored for this purpose, and Daley asked for two long and two short. He got them. Here, as before, the upper board could be seen moving down into contact as the bell proceeded to ring, and moving upward away from contact as it stopped.

"As a final chapter, in the dark Walter gave an exhibition of what is taken to be the addition and withdrawal of his material or force as applied to upper contact board. Daley

was invited, perhaps five or six times all told, to ring the bell himself. Each time he did so through Richardson's finger, placing that finger on the board and then pressing upon it, so that Richardson could verify his statement of the amount of force needed to make contact. They agreed that this varied notably as between their several experiments. I was once invited to try this, and did it through Adler's finger. I had difficulty finding the box, and was not at all confident of just what distance from the fulcrum I applied my pressure. Hence was not able to make any statement of relative stiffness of action."

Demonstrations of this character continued to be given. On November 22 Ekland lifted the box high over his head in good red light, after which Walter started to ring it, and continued to do so intermittently. The strangers on the twenty-third included Dr. Louis Arkin and Dr. H. A. Donnell.

"Arkin held the box as high as possible over his head, whereupon Walter rang it intermittently and kept it thus going until it was put back on the table. He then did the same for Donnell. In each instance the other stranger passed his hands all around and over the box to exclude wires. They had examined it internally and externally in white light before the sitting. Still in red light, Walter rang the bell a required number of times, long and short in required combination, request being made by Arkin after the light went on. Then he did this for Donnell. When he did it again, Arkin said three and Donnell two, at the same time, through misunderstanding; Walter thereupon rang three and then two, all in red light."

The distinguished lady visitors of November 25 got an excellent demonstration of the bell in red light. Three of them in turn got all that had been given on the twenty-third.

Twice on November 28 the bell was photographed by flashlight at a moment when it was ringing while held in air—first by Laura C., then by Richardson. Of the first, Walter

said that some of his material was on the flapper, but he wasn't sure whether it would appear. Of the other, he said he would try to show John's hand and arm holding the box. The print shows something capable of explanation in those terms but incapable of half-tone reproduction.

The friendly circle of December 5 got the bell-box as on the twenty-third and twenty-fifth. Mrs. Yerxa, Mrs. Litzelmann, Mrs. Arnold, in turn, held the bell while it rang. Litzelmann held it and it refused to ring. Walter's laugh was heard and he said he had been joking; try it again. Litzelmann did so, and it rang. There had been ample demonstration that the ringing was under control of the directing intelligence, but this little item is useful as showing that the bell is not set to behave in a given fashion under given treatment. When I say this, of course, I speak not as one who has examined the box, but temporarily take on the viewpoint of one a thousand miles away, who has never seen it. Two other sitters on December 14 had the bell ring in their hands.

Occupying the post of honor at Margery's left on December 30, Dingwall was the bell's next victim. My statement here is wholly on my own responsibility, and not at all on his. The whole performance was given—ringing on the table repeatedly in the dark, ringing to order in the light, ringing and stopping at random as Dingwall stood holding the box up in air and turned completely while so holding it. One interesting variant I noted here. Where often red-light ringing is accompanied by visible motion of the top board, such was not, tonight, the case. Instead the board was held permanently down, in a position barely short of contact. Walter could then complete the contact with minimum effort exerted in the light; and one could not then see the final slight motion necessary for this. One could, however, very readily measure with the eye the decrease in the aperture between the board ends, as against their condition normally. I have generalized about this several paragraphs back.

Dingwall is interested not alone in the question of occurrence, but in the explanation as well. From this angle he did not like the electric contact apparatus. He did not see how, granting genuineness, he should ever be able to tell whether the bell was rung by depressing the board or by inserting a psychic bridge of some sort between the contacts, to carry the current across the gap. The point is a valid one; but does not affect the clean-cut proof of genuineness which we get in this chapter. The reader may count for himself the number of people who have picked up the box and had it ring in their hands, and the number who have seen it ringing in good red light on the table. He may answer for himself the question whether the climax of demonstration is reached here. And if he answer "No," I hope that he will at least look down into his heart and answer in the same sense the question: "Is there *any* phenomenon that could occur, under *any* conditions, that would satisfy you?" After which he may reread my first chapter, or not, just as pleases him.

CHAPTER LIII

SITTINGS AND SITTERS

IN the statement of sitters, arrangements, etc., which follows, the more frequent sitters are designated by arbitrary abbreviations. A key to these, together with an index to the pages of the text where these persons are introduced, and a statement of the number of sittings attended by each from the beginning, up to December 27, 1924, follows:

<i>Sitter and Symbol</i>		<i>Num- ber of Sit- tings</i>	<i>Intro- duced on Page</i>	<i>Sitter and Symbol</i>		<i>Num- ber of Sit- tings</i>	<i>Intro- duced on Page</i>
M	"Margery"	339	13, 18	JJ	Dr. Janney	7	20
FH	"FH"	331	13, 18	MJ	Mrs. Janney	8	20
A	Adler	263	14	K	Keating	10	182
B	Bird	51	149ff	GK	"GK"	13	*
EB	Dr. Brown	125	14	L	Laura C.	59	20
KB	Mrs. Brown	122	14	Les	Lescarbours	5	149
KMB	Mrs. J. M. Bird	11	*	CL	Litzelmann	27	20
DGC	"D. G. C."	2	20	SL	Mrs. Litzelmann	27	20
FPC	Mrs. "D. G. C."	3	20	McD	Dr. McDougall	22	51
Ca	Dr. Caldwell	79	19	Mn	Munn	8	408
Cg	Dr. Carrington	51	150	My	Murray	16	20
Ch	Charles	30	*	P	Dr. Prince	10	150
Ck	Dr. Comstock	56	150	R	Dr. Roback	27	36
Cr	Cross	198	14	MR	Dr. Richardson	81	19
Ct	Conant	57	153	JR	Mrs. Richardson	76	19
Da	Damon	6	457	PR	Miss Richardson	31	19
JD	De Wyckoff	10	458	DR	D. Richardson	6	19
MD	Mrs. De Wyckoff	10	458	JS	Stewart	19	20
E	Ekland	14	149	DS	Mrs. Stewart	18	20
Fr	Mrs. Frothingham	4	19	Sc	Miss Scott	13	57
DF	Mrs. Fr.'s son	7	*	St	"Mrs. S."	30	149
G	Dr. Goodall	26	20	Wc	Dr. Worcester	8	465
He	Helson	6	103	Wd	Miss Wood	11	153
Hm	Mrs. Hemenway	6	402	Wh	Whittaker	3	39
Ho	Houdini	5	151	JY	Yerxa	3	*
Hv	"Haviland"	6	460	EY	Mrs. Yerxa	12	*

* These sitters are either friends of the Crandon family requiring no further introduction, or wives of sitters who have been introduced to the reader.

In addition to those tabulated, other persons have sat, as follows:

Five times: Mrs. Wh., Mrs. McD., Golding.

Four times: Gray (p. 403), Canon Douglas (p. 465), O'Dell, Miss McKinstry, Miss Wiggin.

Three times: Mrs. Gray (p. 462), Parsons (p. 461), Shuttleworth (p. 462), Mrs. Shuttleworth, Mink (p. 462), Hillyer (p. 473), Code (p. 473), Dr. Donnell (p. 468), Carrel, Miss Lord (p. 19), Mrs. F. L. Woods.

Twice: Dr. Murphy (p. 103), "Dr. T." (p. 70), Mr. and Mrs. J. H. McKenzie (p. 136), Mrs. Franks and son (p. 459), Margaret Deland, Mrs. C. S. Bird, Mrs. Donnell, Mrs. "Hv," Nash, Abbott, Mrs. Remick, Mrs. Birge, Mr. and Mrs. Saklatvala, Mr. and Mrs. Lawson, Mrs. Allison, Paton.

Once: Sixty-three persons named in the seance summaries below, and numerous others unnamed.

FIRST PERIOD: SITTINGS OF 1923 IN BOSTON AND VICINITY

For these sittings no record was made of the arrangement of the sitters or the degree of control. In addition to the action indicated by the specific references, it should be borne in mind that the general remarks of Chapters III and V regarding table activity apply to all sittings of this period. Reference may also be made to page 34 for remarks about the degree of illumination prevalent. Margery's presence at all sittings being understood, she is not mentioned in the lists below. The letters ABC stand for the original group of friendly sitters, including FH, A, Cr, Ca, KB and EB. All sittings in Lime Street unless otherwise stated.

May 27: FH, A, Cr, KB, EB. Page 17. No record; reported from memory of sitters.

June 3: ABC. Pp. 22, 34, 45. Record by FH.

June 9: Brown residence. ABC. Pp. 35, 48. Record by F. H.

June 10: ABC. Pp. 49, 60. Record by FH.

June 16: Brown residence. ABC, My, Mrs. My. Pp. 35, 45, 49. Records by FH and another sitter, given in full, pp. 83 ff.

June 17: ABC, My, Mrs. My, MR, JR, DR. Pp. 49, 60. Record by FH.

June 23: Brown residence. ABC. Pp. 36, 50, 69.

June 24: ABC, MR, JR, DR, L, G, R. Pp. 36, 45, 50, 63. Record by FH.

June 30: Brown residence. ABC, L, R, Sc. Pp. 37, 50, 63. Record by FH.

July 1: ABC, L, My, R, Sc, McD. Pp. 50, 67, 62. Record by FH.

July 4: FH, A, L. Pp. 38, 51, 73. Record by FH.

July 9: Hotel room, Wiscasset, Me. KB, L. Record by L. Usual table action, otherwise blank.

July 13: DGC residence, Newton Center. FH, A, KB, EB, L, DGC, FPC. Pp. 38, 51. Record by FH.

July 14: Brown residence. ABC, L, My, R, Sc. Pp. 38, 51, 57. Record by FH.

July 15: ABC, MR, G, L, Sc, R, Mrs. R, Drs. McGinley and Silbermann. Pp. 52, 58, 62, 63. Record by FH.

- July 21: Brown residence. ABC, L. Pp. 52, 64. Record by FH.
- July 22: ABC, MR, JR, DR, G, "Mrs. T." "Mrs. X." Pp. 52, 59, 63, 64. Record by JR.
- July 23: FH, A, MR, JR, L. Pp. 38, 52, 63. Record by FH.
- July 28: Brown residence. ABC, L, JS, DS, Wh, Mrs. Wh. Pp. 39, 52*, 64. Record by FH.
- July 29: ABC, L, JS, DS, Wh, Mrs. Wh, Mrs. Mackie, Miss Fogg. Pp. 45, 53, 54, 64, 70. Record by FH.
- July 30: FH, A, L. Pp. 40, 45, 54, 65. Record by FH.
- Aug. 2: FH, A, L, DGC, FPC. Pp. 40, 54, 65. Record by FH.
- Aug. 4: Brown residence. FH, Ca, Cr, EB, KB, L, My, JS, Sc. Pp. 40, 58, 64. Record by FH.
- Aug. 5: FH's cottage at Winthrop Beach. ABC, L, Sc, JS, DS, Wh, Mrs. Wh, "Dr. T." Pp. 55, 70. Record by FH.
- Aug. 11: Brown residence. ABC, L, Sc, JS, DS, Mrs. Wh, Nash. Pp. 41, 55, 70. Record by FH.
- Aug. 12: ABC, L, JS, DS, Mrs. Wh. Page 41. Record by FH.
- Aug. 18: Brown residence. ABC, JS, R. Page 41; practically a blank. Record by FH.
- Aug. 18, later hour (Lime Street): FH, A, Cr, L, R. Page 55. Record by FH.
- Aug. 19: ABC, L, "Dr. T." Pp. 46, 55, 71, 73. Record by FH.
- Sept. 9: ABC, MR, JR, L, CL, SL. Pp. 41, 46, 65, 74, 88. Record by JR, given in full, pp. 85 ff.
- Sept. 21: A, Cr, L. Usual table action with great freedom, nothing more expected or desired. Record by L.
- Sept. 22: FH, A, Cr, Ch. Page 74. Record by FH.
- Sept. 23: ABC, MR, JR, Ch, Fr, Miss Crawford. Pp. 46, 66, 74, 88. Record by JR.
- Sept. 28: FH, MR, JR and various others unnamed and uncounted. Pp. 46, 75. Record by JR.
- Sept. 30: FH, Fr, ten men and three ladies unnamed. Pp. 41, 65, 75. Record by Fr.
- Oct. 6: FH, MR, JR and various others unnamed and uncounted. Pp. 65, 75, 90. Record by JR.
- Oct. 7: ABC, MR, JR, Ch, CL, SL, R, McD. Pp. 42, 66, 67, 76, 90. Record by JR.
- Oct. 11: FH, A, MR, JR, Ch, Miss Lord. Pp. 42, 76, 95. Record by JR.
- Oct. 12: FH, A, Ca, EB, KB. Pp. 77, 96. Record by FH.
- Oct. 13: FH, A, Ca, EB, KB, Ch. Page 77. Record by FH.
- Oct. 14: FH, A, Ca, EB, KB, MR, JR, CL, SL, Ch, He, Abbott. Pp. 66, 77, 91, 97. Record by FH.
- Oct. 18: FH, A, MR, JR, PR, Ch, Abbott. Pp. 42, 66, 77, 91, 98. Record by JR.
- Oct. 19: FH, A, Ca, EB, KB, JS, DS. Pp. 78, 98. Record by FH.
- Oct. 20: ABC, MR, JR, PR, Ch, Golding, He, Murphy. Pp. 43, 46, 55, 66, 67, 78, 100. Record by JR.
- Oct. 22: FH, A, Colding. Pp. 43, 78. Record by FH.
- Oct. 25: FH, A, Cr, MR, JR, PR, JY, EY, Mrs. Remick. Pp. 43, 78, 91, 100. Record by JR.

* Text here gives date 24th; this should read 28th.

- Oct. 26: FH, A, Cr, EB, KB Ch, R. Pp. 92, 101. Record by FH.
 Oct. 27: FH, A, Cr, Ch. Pp. 79, 92. Record by FH.
 Oct. 28: FH, A, Cr, EB, KB, MR, JR, PR, DR, Ch, EY, R, McD, Mrs. Woods. Pp. 93, 101. Record by JR.
 Nov. 1: FH, A, Cr, MR, JR. Pp. 79, 93. Record by JR.
 Nov. 3: FH, McD, R, He. Pp. 67, 80*, 93. Record drawn and signed by He, given in full pp. 103 ff.
 Nov. 4: ABC, MR, JR, PR, Ch, CL, SL, EY. Pp. 68, 80. Record by JR.
 Nov. 6: ABC. Page 81. Record by FH.
 Nov. 8: ABC, MR, JR, PR, Ch. Page 81. Record by JR.
 Nov. 10(?): FH, McD, R, He. No record; reported from memory. See pp. 108 ff.
 Nov. 11: Hotel room, Andover, Mass. ABC, JS, DS, three others. Pp. 46, 72, 81. Record by FH.
 Nov. 15. In circle: ABC, B. Outside: MR, JR, Ch. Free in room: He. Pp. 67, 68, 81, 101, 116 ff. Records by B and JR.
 Nov. 16. ABC, B, all in circle. Page 81. Records by B and FH.
 Nov. 17. In Circle: ABC, B. Outside: MR, JR, Ch, R. Free in room: He. Pp. 81, 82, 118 ff. Records by B and JR.
 Nov. 17, later hour: ABC, MR, JR, Ch. Page 82. Record by JR.
 Nov. 18. In Circle: ABC, B. Outside: MR, JR, Ch, CL, SL, Fr, R, He, Murphy. Page 120. Records by B and JR.
 Nov. 20: Harvard Psychological Laboratory. ABC, MR, JR, Ch, O'Dell. Pp. 82, 126. Record by JR.
 Nov. 20, later hour (Lime Street): FH, A, Ca, EB, KB, MR, JR, O'Dell. Page 82. Record by JR.
 Nov. 22: ABC, MR, JR, Ch, O'Dell. Pp. 82, 127. Record by JR.
 Nov. 25: ABC, MR, JR, L, Ch, EY, Mrs. Woods. Pp. 82, 127. Record by JR.
 Nov. 26: ABC, MR, JR, PR, L, Ch, CL, SL, JY, O'Dell. Pp. 82, 127 ff. Record by JR.
 Nov. 28: ABC, L, MR, JR, PR, Ch, CL, SL, FPC, EY, Mrs. Remick. Pp. 82, 127. Record by JR.

SECOND PERIOD: EUROPEAN SITTINGS OF DECEMBER, 1923

These are described in full detail in Chapter XIX: they are listed here only by date and place, to make the present record complete.

- Dec. 8: Geley residence, Paris. Record by FH.
 Dec. 12: British College of Psychic Science, London. Record by FH.
 Dec. 16: British Society for Psychical Research. Record by FH.
 Dec. 16, later hour: British College of Psychic Science. Record by FH.
 Dec. 17: Apartment of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, London. Record by FH.

* Text here gives date 1st; this should read 3d.

THIRD PERIOD: SITTINGS OF EARLY 1924, IN BOSTON

Information is not given regularly about order of seating and control, but sometimes appears incidentally or otherwise. The general remarks of page 148 with reference to the action of the table and the Walter voice, and those of Chapter XXVIII regarding the Walter whistle, etc., are applicable to the generality of these sittings. The first paragraph of Chapter XL, describing the musical procedure, also applies. All sittings in Lime Street unless otherwise indicated.

- Dec. 30, 1923. In circle: ABC. Outside: MR, JR, PR, L, Ch, CL, SL, St, EY, Miss Lattimore, Miss Smith, Mrs. Dennett. Pp. 147, 163, 173, 186, 195, 218. Record by JR.
- Dec. 31, 1923. In circle: ABC. Outside: L, St. Pp. 147, 164, 173, 187. Record by FH.
- Jan. 1, 1924. In circle: FH, A, Cr, MR, JR, Mrs. Cadwalader. Outside: St. Continuous control by FH and MR at either side of M. Pp. 147, 148, 164, 174, 187. Record by JR, given in full pp. 246 ff.
- Jan. 3. In circle: ABC, L. Alternately in and out of circle: Sc. Outside: MR, JR, PR, Ch, St, Miss C. S. Pp. 148, 174. Record by JR.
- Jan. 10: FH, A, Cr, MR, JR, Miss Patterson, all in circle. Pp. 148, 164, 174. Record by JR.
- Jan. 13. In circle: ABC, MR. Outside: JR, PR, CL, SL, Ch, DF. Pp. 148, 174. Record by JR.
- Jan. 17. In circle: ABC, MR, JR. Outside: CL, SL, DF. Pp. 148, 164, 174, 218. Record by JR.
- Jan. 18: FH, A, Cr. Pp. 148, 175, 218, 223, 293. Record by FH.
- Jan. 20: ABC, MR, Ch. Pp. 218, 223, 293. Record by FH.
- Jan. 22: ABC. Largely a blank. Pp. 218, 293. Record by FH.
- Jan. 25. In circle: ABC. Outside: MR, PR, Ch. Control continuous by EB and Ca at either side of M. Pp. 175, 293. Record by JR.
- Jan. 27. In circle: ABC, MR, JR. Outside: PR, DF. Pp. 164, 175, 218, 293. Record by JR.
- Jan. 30: FH, A, Cr. Pp. 175, 196, 218, 293. Record by FH.
- Jan. 31. In circle: ABC, MR, JR. Outside: PR. Page 221. Largely a blank. Record by JR.
- Feb. 1. In circle: ABC, MR, JR. Control at both sides of M by FH and EB, and at FH's other side by Ca. Page 196. Record by JR.
- Feb. 3. In circle: ABC. Outside: MR, JR, DR, PR, St, CL, SL, EY, DF, Mrs. Woods, Drs. Louis and Joseph Skirball. Pp. 164, 175, 197, 221. Record by JR.
- Feb. 7. In circle: ABC. Outside: MR, JR, CL, SL, St. Page 197. Record by JR.
- Feb. 9. Circle, in order: * M, A, Cr, FH. Page 197. Record by FH.
- Feb. 12: FH, Cr. Pp. 176, 198. Record by FH.
- Feb. 14: FH, A, Cr, EB, KB. Pp. 176, 198. Record by FH.
- Feb. 16: FH, A, Cr, EB, KB, CL, SL, E, Sc, St. Much of the time M's right hand free. Pp. 165, 176, 198. Record by FH.

* From M's left, around and returning to her right.

- Feb. 18. In circle: ABC, Sc, Miss Walker. Outside: MR, JR, PR, CL, SL, E, St, DF. Pp. 177, 198, 212. Record by JR.
- Feb. 21. In circle: ABC. Outside, sitting very close: JR, St, Miss Lord. Page 177. Record by JR.
- Feb. 24. In circle: ABC. Outside: MR, JR, My, St, Fr, DF. Practically a blank. Record by FH.
- Feb. 24, later hour: FH, Cr. Blank except for voice. Record by FH.
- Feb. 26: FH, A, Cr. M's right hand often free. Pp. 177, 198, 206. Record by FH.
- Feb. 27: FH, Cr, G. Page 207. Record by FH.
- Feb. 29: FH, A, Cr. Voice only sought and obtained. Record by FH.
- Feb. 29, later hour: Litzelmann residence. FH, A, Cr, CL, SL. Control of M from either side by FH and CL. Pp. 199, 207. Record by FH.
- March 1: FH, A, Cr, E, R. Pp. 199, 207, 214. Record by FH.
- March 2: ABC. Page 178. Record by FH.
- March 4. In circle: FH, A, MR, JR. Outside: PR, St. Pp. 207, 221. Record by JR.
- March 7: FH, A, Cr, St. Pp. 200, 215. Record by FH.
- March 9. Circle, in order: * M, Ca, KB, A, Cr, EB, FH. Outside: DS, JS, St, Carrel. Pp. 165, 200, 207, 215, 232, 243, 321. Record by JR, given in full, pp. 247 ff.
- March 10: FH, A, Cr, CL, SL, St, JJ, MJ. Pp. 207, 233, 243. Record by FH.
- March 12: FH, A, Cr, EY. Pp. 166, 178, 207. Record by FH.
- March 13: Circle, in order: * M, MR, Cr, JR, FH; hand control specified on both sides of M throughout. Outside: St. Pp. 166, 200, 216, 221. Record by JR, given in full, pp. 249 ff.
- March 14: FH, A, Cr, St, R. Pp. 167, 200, 224, 233, 243. Record by FH.
- March 15. In Circle: FH, A, Cr, MR, JR, DR. Outside: St. Pp. 178, 201, 208, 224, 230, 233, 244. Record by JR.
- March 16: ABC, L, Miss McKinstry, Mr. and Mrs. Millea. Pp. 167, 201, 208, 233. Record by FH.
- March 17. In circle: FH, A, Cr, L, Miss McKinstry. Outside: St. Pp. 168, 201, 208, 216, 219, 233, 244. Record by FH.
- March 18. In circle: FH, A, Cr, MR, JR, PR. Continuous control of M specified from both sides. Outside: L, Miss McKinstry. Pp. 168, 179, 187, 201, 208, 230, 234. Record by JR.
- March 19: FH, Cr, L, Miss McKinstry, Ck. Page 168. Record by FH.
- March 20: FH, A, Cr. Page 210. Record by FH.
- March 21: FH, Cr, R, McD, Mrs. McD. Control of M from either side by FH and McD. Pp. 168, 179, 201, 234. Record by FH.
- March 22: FH, A, Cr. Pp. 219, 234. Record by FH.
- March 25: FH, A, Cr, G. Pp. 169, 179, 187, 208, 211, 235. Record by FH.
- March 26: FH, Cr. Voice only sought and obtained. Record by FH.
- March 27: FH, A, Cr, EY, JY, Mrs. William Coolidge. Pp. 169, 201, 211, 221, 235, 244, 295. Record by FH.
- March 29. In circle: FH, A, Cr, McD, Mrs. McD. Hand and foot

* From M's left, around and returning to her right.

- control at M's either side by FH and McD. Free in the room: R. Pp. 169, 202, 208, 235, 296, 374. Record by FH.
- March 30: ABC. Pp. 169, 296, 321, 374. Record by FH.
- April 1. In circle: FH, A, Cr, MR, JR; continuous control of M's hands by FH and MR at either side. Outside: G, PR. Later, G was in cabinet with M, but not as part of circle and hence with no control. Pp. 169, 179, 202, 209, 231, 236, 296, 322, 375. Record by FH.
- April 3: FH, A, Cr. Dr. and Mrs. XYZ withdrew before end. Pp. 202, 219, 236. Record by FH.
- April 5: FH, A, Cr, E. Pp. 202, 209, 216, 322. Record by FH.
- April 6. In circle: ABC, E, Sc. Outside: G, Ch, DF. Later, G in cabinet as on April 1. Pp. 202, 216, 236, 375. Record by FH.
- April 8: FH, MR, JR, PR, A, Cr, Ch. Pp. 209, 237, 296. Record by JR.
- April 9. Circle, in order: * M, G, MJ, Cr, SL, FH. Outside: CL, JJ. Continuous control recorded both sides M and FH, with periodic confirmation by SL of link between M and FH. Pp. 169, 237, 375. Record by FH.
- April 11. Circle, in order: * M, B, E, Cr, FH. Pp. 179, 187, 202, 209, 221, 237, 296, 375. Records by B and FH.
- April 12. Circle, in order: * M, FH, A, Mrs. McD, Cr, E, McD. B controlling M-FH link; R free in the room. Pp. 180, 187, 202, 237, 244, 293, 297, 375. Records by B, given in full, pp. 251 ff, and FH, pp. 255 ff.
- April 14: FH, Cr, G, Ck; FH withdrew before end. Practically a blank. Record by FH with assistance of Cr.
- April 14, at later hour: FH, Cr. Blank except for voice. Record by FH.
- April 15. Circle, in order: * M, FH, JR, Cr, A, MR. Pp. 169, 211, 217, 219, 220, 222, 239, 375. Record by JR.
- April 17: FH, A, Cr. Pp. 203, 211, 219, 375. Record by FH.
- April 18: FH, A, Cr, Ck. Page 261. Record by FH.
- April 19: open country, in automobile. M and Cr alone. Voice only; page 263. Record by M and Cr in collaboration.
- April 20, early morning: FH, Cr. Voice only, page 263. Record by FH.
- April 20, evening: ABC, Golding, Ck. Page 265. Record by FH.
- April 21: FH, Cr, G, Golding. Pp. 181, 203, 209, 265, 375. Record by FH.
- April 22. In circle: FH, A, Cr, MR, JR, Ck. Outside: Golding, Ct. Pp. 220, 267, 272. Record by FH.
- April 23: FH, A, Cr. Page 267. Record by FH.

FOURTH PERIOD: OBSERVATION BY SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN COMMITTEE, APRIL-AUGUST, 1924

It is now usually possible to give exact order of circle, and this is done, in the sense of the footnote of this page. Hand control may be assumed always to have been present so far as regards M, within the

* From M's left, around and returning to her right.

limitations of credibility laid down in Chapter XX. The same remark applies to hand control all around the circle. Foot control is discussed with the individual episodes. The voice may always be assumed to have been present, unless the page references specifically deny this.

- April 24. Circle: Ck, A, Cr, B, FH. Outside: Ct. Pp. 220, 224, 269, 273. Records by B and FH.
- April 25. Circle: Ck, A, Cr, B, FH. Outside: Ct. Pp. 222, 269, 275, 297. Records by B, Ct with Ck's signature, FH.
- April 25, later hour. Circle: B, A, Cr, FH. Pp. 222, 270, 276, 287. Records by B, FH.
- April 26. Circle: McD, A, Mrs. McD, Cr, Ck, FH. B in control of M-FH link, R free in the room. FH withdrew before end and B entered circle in his place, disturbing no other arrangements. Pp. 224, 271, 279, 288, 297, 375. Records by B, FH (partial).
- April 27. Circle: Ca, A, EB, KB, Cr, FH. In control of M-FH link: B. Outside: Ck, G, Ch. Pp. 279, 290. Records by B, FH.
- April 28. Circle: B, FH. Page 231. Records by B, FH.
- April 29: ABC. No record made. Pp. 190, 281.
- April 30. Circle: Ck, Cr, FH. Outside: Ct. Page 226. Record by FH.
- May 2: FH, A, Cr, KB, EB, G, JS, DS. Pp. 190, 281. Record by FH.
- May 3: FH, A, Cr, G. Page 281. Record by FH.
- May 4: ABC, G. Pp. 190, 282. Record by FH.
- May 7: FH, Cr. Page 282. Record by FH.
- May 8. In circle:* FH, A, Cr, G, B, Cg. Outside: Ck, Ct, Wd, KMB. Page 239. Records by FH; and by Ck, dictated to Wd during sitting and signed by Ck, Cg, B, Ct.
- May 9. Circle: Cg, G, Cr, B, A, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ct. Outside: Ck, KMB, EB, KB. Pp. 220, 245, 282. Records by FH; by B, drawn later in evening and signed by Cg, B, EB, KB, Cr, FH, KMB; and by Ck, from notes made during sitting, and signed by Ck, Cg, B, Ct.
- May 10. Circle: Cg, A, KB, Cr, EB. In control of M-EB link: B. Outside: Ck, Wd, KMB. Page 284; largely blank. Records by B; and by Ck, dictated to Wd during sitting and signed by Ck, Cg, B.
- May 10, FH having come in. Circle: Cg, A, B, Cr, KB, FH. Outside: Ck, Wd, EB, KMB. Page 284; largely blank. Records as above, also by FH.
- May 10, later in evening. Circle: Cg, A, B, Cr, KB, FH. Outside: EB, KMB. Page 284. Records by B and FH.
- May 11. Circle: McD, A, B, Cr, Cg, FH. Outside: Ck, Wd, My, Ca, EB, KB, KMB. G arrived late and entered circle between A and McD. Pp. 190 240, 286, 297. Records by FH; and one dictated to Wd during sitting, mainly by Ck, signed by Ck, McD, Cg, B.
- May 11, at later hour. Circle: McD, A, B, Cr, Cg. Outside: Ck, Wd, My, Ca, EB, KB, KMB, G. Pp. 169, 226. Record dictated and signed, as above.
- May 12. Circle: Cg, G, A, Cr, B, FH. KMB, outside, took G's place when he left. Pp. 181, 203, 231, 286, 294, 375. Record by B.

* This form of statement indicates no record of order.

- May 13. Circle: P, A, Cg, MR, Cr, JR, FH. In control of M-FH link: B. Outside: KMB, Miss Thomas. Pp. 220, 222, 228, 241, 323, 376. Record by B, signed by Cg.
- May 14. Circle: McD, Cg, Ck, P, FH. In control of M-FH link: B. On sofa in doorway: Wd. Pp. 228, 323, 324, 325, 392. Records by FH; and one dictated to Wd by various sitters, signed by McD, Ck, Cg, B. Latter record substantially in full, pp. 305 ff.
- May 15. Circle: P, A, KMB, Cr, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ck. Outside: Ct. Pp. 191, 203, 231, 241, 294, 324, 376. Records by FH and KMB.
- May 16. Circle: B, L, A, KMB, FH. Ck and Ct as on May 15. Pp. 241, 376. Record by FH; and by Ct, taking such dictation as was offered by others, and signed by Ck, B, Ct.
- May 17. Circle: McD, Cg, R, Ck, FH. In control of M-FH link: B. In hall, on sofa across doorway: L. Chapter XLI, page 377. Records by B, L, FH.
- May 18: FH, B, Cg, Ck. Practically blank. Records by FH and Ck.
- May 19. Circle: Cg, KB, EB, FH. In control of M-FH link: B. Pp. 203, 297 ff, 308, 378. Record by B, signed by all sitters, see pp. 297 ff.
- May 20. In circle: FH, MR, JR, SL, JJ. Outside: CL. Pp. 181, 220, 294, 378. Record by FH.
- May 21, 22, 23. No record of sitters. Memoranda by FH showing that sittings were held, aimed at scales phenomena.
- May 24. Present, with varying arrangement: FH, A, EB, KB, McD, Ck, R, G. Page 345. Records by FH and Ck.
- May 25. Circle: A, KB, R, EB, FH. Outside: Ck. Page 325. Record by FH.
- May 26. Circle: G, A, FH. Outside: Ck. Page 347. Records by FH and Ck.
- May 27. Circle: MR, JR, A, PR, FH. Page 347. Records by FH and JR.
- May 28: FH, A, Cg. Total blank. Memorandum by FH.
- May 29. Circle: Les, Cg, Ck, FH. B in control of M-FH link, first from outside, later from place in cabinet and circle. Ct in doorway. Pp. 192, 309, 348. Dictaphone record signed by Ck, Cg, B, Ct; and record by FH.
- May 30. Circle: Les, Cg, R, McD, Ck, FH. B in control of link from outside, Ct in doorway. Pp. 192, 203, 309, 348. Records as May 29.
- May 31: Circle as May 30. B in control of link from place in cabinet but not in circle. Pp. 192, 203, 309, 326. Records as May 29 lacking Ct's signature.
- June 1: Circle and link control as May 31. Pp. 192, 309. Records as May 31.
- June 1, at later hour. Circle: Les, Cg, B, FH. Pp. 309, 360. Records by B and FH.
- June 2. Circle: Cg, KB, A, EB, FH. Largely blank; page 350. Record by FH.
- June 3. Circle: as June 2. Outside: MR, JR, PR, Ck, Miss Lord. Largely blank. Record by FH.
- June 5. In circle: FH, JR, MR, A, Cr. Page 350. Record by JR.

- June 6. Circle: A, KB, Cr, EB, FH. Outside: Ck, Ct. Pp. 351, 361. Record by FH.
- June 7. Circle: CL, A, MJ, Cr, SL, FH. Page 351. Record by FH.
- June 8. Circle: Ca, A, KB, Cr, EB, FH. Outside: Ck, Ct. Pp. 352, 362. Record by FH, and signed statement by Ct covering photographic work.
- June 10. Circle: MR, A, PR, Cr, JR, FH. Outside: Ck, Ct. Blank except for voice; page 352. Records by FH and Ck.
- June 12. Circle: A, KB, Cr, EB, FH. Outside: Ck, Ct. Reference and records as June 10.
- June 13. ABC. Page 353. Record by FH.
- June 14. ABC in circle, Ck outside. Voice only; page 353. Records by FH and Ck.
- June 15. ABC, CL, SL, My, JJ, MJ, all in circle. Page 354. Record by FH.
- June 16. ABC in circle, Ck and Ct outside. Largely blank. Record by FH.
- June 17. Circle: MR, A, Cr, JR, FH. Ck in control of M-FH link when not elsewhere engaged. Pp. 302, 326, 354. Signed dictaphonic record by Ck, and record by FH.
- June 18. Circle: A, KB, Cr, EB, FH. Outside: My, Ck, Ct. Page 326. Dictaphone record by Ck, and record by FH.
- June 21. Circle: E, A, Cr, FH. Page 355. Record by FH.
- June 22. Circle: Ca, A, KB, Cr, EB, FH. In control of M-FH link: B. Outside: Ck, Ct, E. Page 366. Records by Ck (dictaphonic, as always with Ck's records hereafter), and FH.
- June 23. Circle: Cg, A, Cr, FH. In control of M-FH link: B. Outside: Ck, Ct. Page 367. Records by Ck, Cg, signed by B and FH.
- June 24. Circle: Cg, MR, A, Cr, JR, FH. In control of M-FH link from place in cabinet and in circle: B.* In the room: Ck, G, PR. In the doorway: Ct. Pp. 181, 193, 327, 368. Records by FH: by B signed by Cg and given in full, Chapter XXXIX; by Ck up to exhaustion of dictaphone cylinder; and subsequent signed memorandum by Ck, making good in part deficiency of his first record.
- June 25. Circle: Cg, A, KB, Cr, EB, FH. B, Ck, Ct as June 23. Pp. 231, 327, 368. Records by Ck, FH.
- June 26. Sitters as June 25, with Ct absent. Pp. 193, 328, 369. Records by FH, and by Ck signed by Cg.
- June 27. Sitters as June 26, with Ck absent. Pp. 329, 369. Records by B and FH.
- June 28. Circle: Cg, A, KB, Cr, Sc, EB, FH. In control of M-FH link: B. Pp. 329, 369, 378. Records by B and FH.
- June 29. Circle: Cg, Ca, A, KB, Cr, Sc, EB, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ct. In the room: Ck. Pp. 303, 379, 386. Record by FH.
- June 30. Circle: Cg, A, KB, Cr, EB, FH. Ct and Ck as June 29. Pp. 330, 369, 379, 380, 386. Records by Ck and FH.
- July 1. Sitters and records as July 30. Pp. 330, 369, 380.
- July 2. Circle: Cg, Mrs. McMullen, A, CL, MJ, Cr, JJ, SL, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ct. Pp. 370, 387. Record by FH.

* Here as elsewhere where this entry appears, B is not listed as regularly in the circle because his presence at this point does not separate M and FH as widely as other consecutive sitters are separated. This is not to be construed as admission of inadequate control, but simply as descriptive of the location in the room of M and FH.

- July 3. Circle: Cg, A, KB, Cr, DS, EB, FH. In control of M-FH link: K. Outside: JS. Page 370. Record by Cg.
- July 4. Circle: E, A, Cr, EB, FH. In control of links at M's either side: Cg, K. Pp. 182, 330, 370, 379, 387. Record by Cg.
- July 5. Circle: E, A, Cr, FH. Control of links as July 4. Outside: EB, KB. Page 331. Record by Cg.
- July 6. Circle: Cg, EB, A, Cr, KB, FH. In control of M-FH link: K. Pp. 331, 370, 380. Record by Cg.
- July 7. Circle: Cg, K, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ct. Pp. 370, 388. Record by Cg.
- July 8. Circle: Cg, MR, Cr, K, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ct. In room: Ck. Pp. 331, 307, 380, 389. Records by Ck and FH.
- July 9. Circle: Cg, Cr, K, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ct. Pp. 182, 331, 370, 380. Records by Cg and FH.
- July 10. Sitters and records as July 9. Pp. 331, 370, 380, 389.
- July 11: Ck's apartment. Circle: Cg, MR, K, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ct. Outside: Ck, Wd. Pp. 193, 332, 370 ff, 390, 393 ff. Dictaphone record, partly during seance and partly after, signed by Ck, Ct, Cg, K; and independent record by Cg, signed by K.
- July 12. Circle: Cg, A, Cr, K, FH. Pp. 182, 356, 380, 396. Record by Cg, signed by K.
- July 13. Circle: C, A, Cr, EB, FH. Page 397. Record by FH.
- July 14. Circle: MR, L, JR, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ct. Page 382. Record by FH.
- July 15. Circle: A, L, Cr, FH. Pp. 382, 398. Record by FH.
- July 16. Circle: A, Cr, FH. Pp. 382, 398. Record by FH.
- July 19. Circle: CL, A, L, Cr, SL, FH. Pp. 383, 398. Record by FH.
- July 20. Circle: A, JS, KB, Cr, EB, DS, FH. Control of M-FH link by JS, reaching across. Outside: L, Carrel. Pp. 182, 383, 398. Record by FH.
- July 22. Circle: B, A, Cr, FH. In control of M-FH link: Ct. Pp. 383, 398. Records by B and FH.
- July 23. Circle: Ho, Mn, Ct, FH. In control of M-FH link: B. Pp. 183, 332, 384. Joint record signed by Ho, Mn, Ct, B, given in full, pp. 409 ff.
- July 24: Ck's apartment. Circle and link control as July 23. In the room: Ck, Wd. Pp. 184, 332, 384. Record by Ck, carrying all signatures, and given in full, pp. 413 ff.
- July 25: Ck's apartment. Circle: B, Ct, FH. In control of M-FH link: Wd. In room: Ck. Page 399. Records by Ck, signed by Ct and B; by B; and by FH.
- July 26. Circle: B, A, FH. Page 400; largely a blank. Record by FH.
- July 27. Circle: My, A, KB, Cr, EB, FH. In control of M-FH link when not elsewhere engaged: B. Pp. 184, 193, 400. Records by B and FH.
- July 28. Circle: My, A, L, EB, FH. Pp. 384, 400. Record by FH.
- July 29. Circle: A, FH. A blank. Memorandum by FH.
- July 30. Circle: MR, Cr, JR, FH. Page 384. Record by JR.
- Aug. 1. Circle: A, Cr, FH. Page 400. Record by FH.
- Aug. 3. Circle: Cg, A, Cr, FH. Page 400. Record by Cg, signed by A.

- Aug. 4. Circle: Cg, A, Cr, FH. Page 401. Record by Cg.
 Aug. 5. Circle: Cg, A, Cr, FH. Largely blank; memorandum by Cg.
 Aug. 6. Circle: Cg, A, Cr, FH, who later withdrew. Page 401. Record by Cg.
 Aug. 7. Circle: Cg and Hm in alternation, A, Cr, FH. Pp. 402, 456. Record by Cg.
 Aug. 8. Ck's apartment. Present: Ck, Cg, Ct, FH, Wd. Record by Ck.
 Aug. 11. Ck's apartment. Circle: Cg, Da, Wd, FH. Ck in room. Page 402. Records by Ck and FH.
 Aug. 12. Circle: Mrs. Deland, Cg, L, Cr, A, Da, Hm, FH. Later, Da moved to place between M and Mrs. Deland. Pp. 185, 403, 457. FH's record carrying all signatures.
 Aug. 13. Circle: A, FH. Largely blank. Memorandum by FH.
 Aug. 14. Circle: JD, Cg, Cr, MD, FH. Pp. 403, 458. Record by FH.
 Aug. 15. Circle: JD, A, Cr, MD, FH. Records by JD and FH.
 Aug. 16. Circle: Gray, A, L, Cr, FH. Page 458. Record by FH.
 Aug. 17. Circle: Gray, KB, A, Cr, L, EB, FH. Pp. 403, 459, 469. Record by FH.
 Aug. 18. Circle: Gray, L, Ck, FH. Largely blank. Memorandum by FH.
 Aug. 19. Circle: JD, A, L, Cr, MD, FH. Pp. 459, 469. Records by JD and FH.
 Aug. 20. Circle: JD, A, L, Cr, MD, FH. Page 459. Record by FH.
 Aug. 21. Circle: JD, G, L, A, Cr, MD, FH. Outside: Mrs. Franks and son. Page 459. Record by FH.
 Aug. 22. Circle: Mrs. Franks, A, L, Cr, Franks, FH. Record by FH.
 Aug. 23. Circle: A, L, Cr, FH. Record by FH.
 Aug. 24. Circle: A, L, FH. Record by FH.
 Aug. 25. Ck's apartment. Circle: JD, L, Cr, MD, FH. Record by FH.
 Aug. 25, immediately following above, Ck's apartment. Circle: Ho, Ck, Mn, FH. P in control of M-FH link. M in the cage supplied by Ho. Blank except for voice. Pp. 428 ff. Committee record, carrying all signatures.
 Aug. 26. Ck's apartment. All arrangements, and record, as second sitting of Aug. 25. Pp. 432 ff.
 Aug. 27. Ck's apartment. Sitting attempted under same conditions as Aug. 26, but abandoned without producing any record.

PERIOD V: SITTINGS OF LATE 1924, AFTER FINAL SITTING BY SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN COMMITTEE AS SUCH

No pretense is made of covering these seances completely in the text, hence the page references given are not necessarily completely descriptive of the seances. The same applies to some of the above sittings after July 25.

- Aug. 30. Circle: Hv, L, Bartlett, Cr, Miss Wiggins, FH. Pp. 460, 470. Record by FH.
 Sept. 3. Circle: A, Cr, FH. Page 460. Record by FH.
 Sept. 4. Circle: Hv, A, Cr, Mrs. Hv, FH. Page 461. Record by FH.
 Sept. 5. Circle: Parsons, MR, L, Cr, A, JR, FH. Pp. 461, 470. Record by FH.

- Sept. 7. Circle: JS, KB, A, DS, EB, FH; control continuously announced to unusual degree for intimate circle like this one. Page 461. Record by FH.
- Sept. 8. Circle: G, My, KB, A, L, EB, FH. No attempt to get more than voice, in view of death of Cr that day. Record by FH.
- Sept. 10. Circle: My, KB, A, L, EB, FH. Voice only, in view of funeral of Cr that day. Record by FH.
- Sept. 13. Present: A, MR, JR, PR, L, Hm, Nason, Bazinet, FH. Pp. 462, 470. Record by JR.
- Sept. 14. Circle: JS, KB, A, DS, EB, FH. Page 462. Record by FH.
- Sept. 15. Present: A, L, FH, Hv, Mrs. Birge, Miss Wiggin, three others. Page 462. Record by FH.
- Sept. 16. Circle: MR, JR, A, MJ, JJ, CL, SL, FH. Record by JR.
- Sept. 17. Circle: Shuttleworth, Mrs. Gray, Mink, A, Parsons, Mrs. Shuttleworth, FH. Pp. 462, 470. Record by FH; and one drawn by the four Buffalo sitters and carrying their signatures.
- Sept. 18. Circle: Shuttleworth, Mink, Mrs. Shuttleworth, A, Mrs. Gray, FH. Page 463. Records as Sept. 17.
- Sept. 19. Circle: Shuttleworth, Mrs. Shuttleworth, Mink, A, Mrs. Gray, F. H. Page 463. Records as Sept. 17.
- Sept. 20. Circle: Scott (not Sc), A, Parker, FH. Page 464. Record by FH, and published statement by Scott and Parker.
- Sept. 21. Circle: Hv, KB, JS, A, DS, EB, FH. Record by FH.
- Sept. 25 approx: Mn's apartment in New York. Present: Mn, DS, Carrel, Gray, and one or two others. FH absent. Page 468. Oral reports only.
- Sept. 27. Circle: JD, A, Mrs. Saklatvala, Saklatvala, B, MD, FH. Page 465. Records by B and FH.
- Sept. 28. Circle: JD, KB, A, My, C, EB, MD, FH. Outside: the Saklatvalas. Page 464. Record by FH.
- Sept. 30. Circle: MR, Ct, FH. Largely blank. Memorandum by FH.
- Oct. 2. Circle: Campbell, PR, MR, A, Taylor, FH. Record by FH.
- Oct. 3. Circle: McD, Mrs. McD, FH. Page 470. Records by FH and McD.
- Oct. 5. Circle: Ca, JS, KB, A, JJ, MJ, CL, DS, EB, SL, FH. Record by FH.
- Oct. 8. Circle: MR, Ct, A, B, JR, FH. Records by B and FH.
- Oct. 10. Circle: A, Ct, FH. Largely blank. Record by FH.
- Oct. 12. Circle: Ca, A, KB, EB, FH. Largely blank. Record by FH.
- Oct. 14. Circle: Parsons, JR, A, MR, Miss Dwight, PR, Hm, Mrs. Deland, Mrs. C. S. Bird (not KMB), FH. Page 465. Record by FH.
- Oct. 17. Circle: R, GK, Ct, A, Mrs. Jordan, CL, SL, FH. Page 470. Record by FH.
- Oct. 18. Circle: Tilney, Mrs. Birge, Newhall, Mrs. Newhall, Hv, A, Birge, Miss Wiggin, Kirkbride, Mrs. Tilney, FH. Outside: Mrs. Kirkbride, Mrs. Hv, E. Page 471. Record by FH.
- Oct. 19. Circle: nameless gentleman, KB, JS, A, Dye, DS, EB, nameless lady, FH. Page 471. Record by FH.
- Oct. 20. Circle: Wc, A, Wc Junior, Douglas, FH. Record by FH.
- Oct. 21. Circle: Wc, Douglas, FH, P. Rearranged to P, Douglas, Wc, FH. Wholly blank. Memorandum by FH.
- Oct. 22. Circle: P, Mrs. Sagendorph who withdrew before end, Douglas, Wc, FH. Page 471. Record by FH.

- Oct. 23. Circle: P, Douglas, Wc, FH. Practically a blank. Record by FH.
- Oct. 24. daylight sitting. P and M only. Pp. 471 ff. Statement by Margery and confidential record by P.
- Oct. 24. evening. Circle: A, Ct, FH. Page 465. Record by FH.
- Oct. 25. Circle: MR, Da, Hillyer, A, PR, Code, JR, FH. Page 473. Record by FH.
- Oct. 27. Circle: MR, Hm, A, PR, GK, EB, JR, FH. Outside: KB, Ct and nameless lady. Wholly blank. Record by FH.
- Oct. 28. Circle: McD, Wc, FH. Page 474. Record drawn and signed by McD and Wc.
- Oct. 30. sitters and record as Oct. 28. Page 475.
- Oct. 31. Circle: CL, Mrs. Allison, A, SL, FH. Record by FH.
- Nov. 2. Circle: EB, Mrs. Allison, A, KB, Mrs. Lambert, EY, FH. Record by FH.
- Nov. 3. Circle: G, A, Ct, FH. Record by FH.
- Nov. 7. Circle: McD, Wc, FH. Page 477. Record drawn and signed by McD and Wc.
- Nov. 8. Circle: MR, JR, A, PR, FH. Record by JR.
- Nov. 9. Circle: Newmann, EB, A, KB, FH. Page 478. Record by FH.
- Nov. 10. Circle: A, FH. Largely a blank. Memorandum by FH.
- Nov. 11. Circle: MR, Da, A, JR, FH. Outside: Ct, GK. Page 478. Record by FH.
- Nov. 12. Circle: My, A, Ct, EB, FH. Pp. 466, 479. Record by FH.
- Nov. 13. Circle: McD, A, Wc, FH. Page 479. Record by FH.
- Nov. 14. Circle: A, Ct, EY, FH. Largely a blank. Record by FH.
- Nov. 15. Circle: Hv, A, Miss Wiggin, FH. Record by FH.
- Nov. 16. Circle: Patten Costikyan, Hillyer, A, Code, Da, FH. Page 479. Record by FH.
- Nov. 17. Circle: A, Ct, GK, B, FH. Records by B and FH.
- Nov. 18. Circle: Daley, MR, A, B, JR, FH. Page 479. Records by B and FH.
- Nov. 20. Circle: A, Ct, GK, B. (Brilliant telekinesis not mentioned in text). Record by B.
- Nov. 20, later hour. Circle: A, Ct, B, FH. Records by B and FH.
- Nov. 21. Circle: A, B, FH. Record by B.
- Nov. 22. Circle: E, A, FH. Page 482. Record by FH.
- Nov. 23. Circle: Arkin, E, A, Donnell, FH. Pp. 467, 482. Record by FH.
- Nov. 24. Circle: Jeschke, A, Ct, GK, FH. Record by FH.
- Nov. 25. Circle: Mrs. (Cameron) Lewis, Hm, MR, Mrs. Bagley, A, Mrs. C. S. Bird (not KMB), JR, FH. Pp. 467,* 482. Record by FH.
- Nov. 28. Circle: MR, L, A, PR, Ct, JR, FH. Outside: St. Page 482. Record by FH.
- Dec. 2. Circle: A, St, FH. Largely a blank. Record by FH.
- Dec. 3. Circle: MR, A, Ct, Mrs. Donnell, Donnell, JR, FH. Outside: St. Page 468. Record by FH.
- Dec. 5. Circle: CL, EY, A, Mrs. Arnold, SL, FH. Outside: St. Page 483. Record by FH.

* Text of page 467 reads Nov. 28, in error.

- Dec. 8, approx: De Wyckoff apartment in New York. Present: JD, MD, Lawson, Mrs. Lawson, Mn, L, and two or three others. Page 468. Oral reports only.
- Dec. 9, approx: place, sitters and reports as above.
- Dec. 11. Circle: A, St, Ct, Donnell, FH. Record by FH.
- Dec. 12. Circle: A, Ct, GK, FH. Record by FH.
- Dec. 13. Circle: A, Ct, GK, FH. Record by FH.
- Dec. 14. Circle: Paton, JS, A, Da, Code, Hillyer, DS, FH. Outside: St. Record by FH.
- Dec. 15. Circle: A, Ct, GK, FH. Outside: St. Record by FH.
- Dec. 17. Circle: A, Ct, GK, FH. Outside: MR, JR, PR, St. Record by JR.
- Dec. 19. Circle: A, Ct, GK, FH. Outside: St. Record by FH.
- Dec. 21, 22, 23, approx: Buffalo and Niagara Falls. No record of attendance save that FH was always there. Page 468. Oral reports only.
- Dec. 26. Circle: A, L, Ct, GK, FH. Outside: St. Record by FH.
- Dec. 27. Circle: A, L, Ct, GK, FH. Outside: St. Record by FH.

CHAPTER LIV

IN SUMMATION

THE action and logic leading up from my introductory remarks to the climax at the bottom of page 484 is inevitably, and very properly, stretched out thin by the necessity of detailed narrative. Now that the detailed data of Chapter LIII are behind us—behind us in point of page numbers, of course; I do not mean to imply that that chapter has been read as one reads ordinary text—it is possible, and desirable, by way of graceful termination, to give a little attention to the question of just what we may claim to have demonstrated. I have no reference here to the subsidiary inferences about theory and *modus operandi* which I have set down or which the reader may work out for himself. The question I wish to review briefly before I leave you is simply this: what specific incidents have we, and just how strong is each, for claiming that the Margery case demonstrates the reality of objective psychic phenomena? Such review is necessary, to guard against the very human tendency to consider a large number of fifty per cent incidents as constituting, in their totality, one hundred per cent proof.

We must, of course, demand that the critic at whom our evidence is addressed be not insulated against having validity proved to him. This insulation I think can be excluded if we make three demands upon the person whose conviction we attempt. He must not insist upon dictating to the universe how it shall work; he must be willing to withhold all charges of fraud from a reasonable number, if not from all, of those whom (pp. 156 ff.) I present in the light of investigators; and

of course he must fully appreciate that proof of occurrence carries no bearing upon any theory of cause.

I have explained adequately how it comes about that not all, or nearly all, of the phenomena of the seance room take place under conditions that bar the physical possibility of fraud. I shall not further apologize for or explain the fact, then, that in the present summary of incidents leading up to demonstration of genuineness, I omit a great many items which the text of preceding chapters shows me to regard as genuine. But one or two routine generalizations I must make before passing to the summary in question.

Incidents on which he is asked to judge the mediumship, the critic would, on general principles, prefer to have occurring elsewhere than in the medium's own house. He would prefer to have them all occurring under good light and uninterrupted light. He will find certain sitters whom he is not prepared to exclude as possible accomplices; and he would prefer to have all critical incidents occurring in the absence of such persons. He would prefer to have them all occurring behind locked doors. Other preferences he would hold which I shall not detail.

So far, so good; we can sympathize with him. But suppose that we cite, as a critical phenomenon, one that occurred in the psychic's own house; or in darkness; or in the presence of one whom we regard as a possible confederate; or in an open room. If a rational suggestion can be made, showing how the element or elements to which objection is raised could have been employed in the fraudulent production of the phenomenon in question, this incident must be withdrawn from the list of those offered in support of the mediumship. But—to concentrate our attention upon a single example and to make this example very specific—the mere citation of the presence of F. H. in the room does not constitute valid attack upon what happened in his presence, unless and until it is shown how he could have contributed to the observed result.

The critic who insists otherwise is not playing fair; he is dodging his responsibilities. An inference of fraud must be just as firmly and just as explicitly buttressed as one of validity. It would be just as silly to insist that the phenomena are genuine because they occur in F. H.'s absence, as to insist that they are unproved and unprovable solely because they occur in his presence.

Suppose you regard F. H. as a potential accomplice; and suppose the bell-box rings in red light while carried about by one whom you trust, after being examined internally and externally by one whom you trust. What possible bearing can F. H.'s presence in the room now have? You might just as sensibly object to his presence in Boston, or in Massachusetts, or in America, or in the world! Whether the presence of your suspect is, or is not, innocuous, depends wholly upon the conditions existing parallel with it; and so for all the other circumstances of this, that, or another seance to which objections are urgeable only as *general principles*.

I shall cite as evidential none of the phenomena prior to the European trip of December, 1923, for the simple and sufficient reason that none of them is adequately recorded. When we look back upon 1923 through the vista afforded by the events of 1924, we must conclude that the phenomena of the former year were, on the whole, valid; but nobody of good judgment would try to prove them so other than by reflection from 1924. So I start the serious business of this chapter with December, 1923, and with reference to the events of Chapter XIX.

The levitation, raps and cabinet destruction of December 8, 1923, in Paris (page 135); the table action of the afternoon of the sixteenth in London (page 136); that of the same evening on other premises (page 138); and some of the events of December 17 (page 139)—all these items were obtained in strange places, in good light, and under the control of those whose competence to control in the light and whose integrity

cannot be attacked. I have sufficient independent check upon F. H.'s record for each of these sittings to take all the sting out of the fact that in each case his is the only document I am privileged to cite. All these phenomena must, without hesitation, be adjudged demonstrably valid.

Coming back to America with Margery, we find comparatively few of her sittings of early 1924 to have been so held and so recorded that we can cite their results here. Examination of the data of Chapter LIII shows that the only dates prior to April 24 on which we are told anything that is pertinent to the exclusion of fraud are January 1, 25; February 1, 9, 29; March 9, 13, 18, 21, 29; April 1, 9, 11, 12, 15. There is obviously much greater security attached to some of the records just cited than to others. Checking in each case the seance action against what we are told of the control and bearing in mind the pronouncements of pp. 156 ff., we may make the following judgments:

The hammer incident of January 1 (page 164) requires confederacy or acquiescence by F. H., if we are to escape the confession of genuineness. It is doubtful whether his confederacy or acquiescence (I employ the former term hereafter in a sense including the latter) would be sufficient to explain the contacts of this date, in view of the statements of control cited on page 174; and where I will grant the hard-boiled species of skeptic the privilege of suspecting F. H. on general principles, I cannot grant this privilege with respect to Dr. Richardson. The cold air of this and other dates prior to May 29 I will not cite, in the absence of any record of organized exploration to show that it did not come through the doorway; this plea I grant the skeptic, though I shall show that it contradicts the ultimate facts.

Most of my readers, I believe, will find very impressive the psychic lights of February 1 (page 196), occurring under conditions of extremely good control in the region of Margery and F. H. The large circle is a drawback, as is the failure to

record the order of sitting. But the clean-cut statement of the location of these lights in a region accessible only to Margery and her immediate neighbors, and their motion on a sufficiently liberal scale to discredit the theory that they were painted on her gown, are very favorable. They were too high to be on her foot (pp. 368-9); and the remarks of the preceding paragraph about confederacy by Richardson I apply also to this hypothesis as affecting Drs. Brown and Caldwell. If I refrain from insisting upon the validity of these lights, it is solely because of the general reservation about this particular phenomenon which I shall presently set down. And if I appear to depart from this reservation in the case of the "psychic livestock," it is because the element of controlled motion here is so strong that considerations of hand and foot captivity again become paramount, putting the reservations in question out of operation.

This same element of motion in the lights of February 9 (pp. 197-98) would call for confederacy by F. H. or Adler, or more probably by both. The banging on the cabinet by a luminous mass is very useful, too; but one wishes that there was given a better idea of its size and its exact location.

Anything occurring on February 29 acquires automatically some of the standing of the European experiences, though of course the Litzelmann residence is less foreign to Margery's previous knowledge than those in which she sat during December. I think the incident of page 199 would require preparation of the premises or transportation to them of bulky apparatus, both of which hypotheses can be laughed out of court. The Susie episode of page 207 is one that would certainly require both of Margery's hands, adding Litzelmann to the list of confederates.

The ash tray manipulation of March 9 (page 165) gives us a manifestation which passed clear around the table, in a circle the complete make-up of which is stated. If we insist upon fraud, it comes very close indeed to putting the entire

ABC group in the class with the circle mentioned on page 176; and, in the present case, the intellectual caliber of the sitters is such as to give this notion an absurdity which it did not carry in the instance there cited. The "scientific research" of this date (page 200) would carry much the same implication. And when we come to the psychic bat of page 207, we really must choose between universal confederacy and validity. If we accept the former alternative, the incident of pp. 215-16 not only adds the complication of pre-arrangement, but increases the confederates by one (Mrs. Stewart), and brings up, in acute form, the general remarks of page 213. Of course, there were four persons outside the circle here; but Mrs. S. is badly crippled with arthritis, and we ought to dismiss the possibility that Carrel, sitting for the first and practically last time, and introduced to Margery only that day, could have played any part in such an elaborate and skillfully staged program. If we attempt to explain the phenomena as due wholly to confederacy by the Stewarts, from their place of greater freedom outside the circle, we escape the difficulties of hand control in the circle. But the difficulties of page 213 would be far more serious for a sitter outside the circle, isolated therefrom, than for one in the circle and at the table; and all experience points toward the utter impossibility of moving all about the room, through the narrow spaces between the articles of furniture, and even between the members of the very crowded circle to reach their hands (page 165) and faces (page 207), without disaster. The pole manipulation (pp. 232-3) of this date I grant could have been done by the Stewarts, but the Victrola stoppage (page 321) was apparently not accidental, and if not so must have been genuine. I am very insistent here: nobody could possibly leave his seat in the Lime Street seance room, navigate safely to the Victrola corner, find and manipulate the instrument, and get back home, without detection. This whole seance simply exudes validity, despite the four detached sitters.

On March 13 we escape this reproach; the only "loose" sitter was the lady who, as I have just explained, does not count in this connection. The flower contacts of page 166 again call for universal confederacy; and this time there is not the tenuous possibility of escape from that theory. The lights and raps and pickpocket stuff of pp. 200 and 216 clinch the point. I must again, as on page 200, emphasize the happy circumstance of Adler's absence. And at the top of page 167 we find the phenomena extending into a region which was certainly inaccessible to fraud, unless Margery were to stand up, with resultant grave danger of detection.

The flower manipulation of March 18 (page 168) adds the force of reiteration to the action of the ninth, and adds some new names to the list of confederates; if Laura C and Miss McKinsty are to be touched fraudulently as they stand outside the circle, at least one of them must be implicated. The sliding bear of page 208 would probably be citable here if the record located it more accurately; as things are, I leave it out, with other items of this date. But page 230 gives something which I must strongly urge as necessarily valid, and which is unusual in the sense that it is seldom possible to surround a rapping incident with adequate control. The critical feature here is the location on Mrs. Richardson's ring, a statement which cannot be charged to observational error, as can most identifications of the locus of raps. And page 234 gives us a pole demonstration which would call for wholesale if not universal confederacy.

I leave it to the skeptic to explain who touched McDougall (page 179) on March 21. We have also, on this date (page 234), pole manipulation the "normal" explanation of which depends in unusually clean-cut fashion upon confederacy by F. H.

The flower episode of March 29 (page 169), under foot control as well as hand control of Margery, introduces the complications of page 213 in acute form; even in their

absence it involves wholesale confederacy, since Margery could not reach the heads on the other side of the table without betraying herself to McDougall; and of course, it depends absolutely upon the active connivance of F. H. If I refrain from citing page 235 here, too, this is solely because of the uncertainty about foot control during the episode. The presence of Roback in the room and of the couch across the doorway (page 208) adds new complications, yet the traveling light displayed extreme range. On this occasion, if never before, it is hardly sensible to talk about invasion of the room by a confederate from without. And when we find (page 374) the megaphone displaying the same unwonted range as the psychic lights and the flowers, we must regard this practical exclusion of the hypothetical invader as very fortunate indeed.

I cite the flower contacts of April 1 (page 169) with the remark that Richardson's control is as valid as McDougall's. When (page 179) Goodall is pushed about as he sits, both hands free, in the cabinet with Margery, I think we may conclude that something more than mere release of Margery's hand by F. H. would have been required—for Goodall is a keen observer, and I don't believe she could push him or his chair, with her hand or her foot, without his knowledge. The unusual freedom of action by the psychic lights on this occasion (page 202) is also citable, in connection with the hand control; for these lights are almost, if not quite, always in a position where any accusation of fraud must lie against Margery personally. The sliding bear of page 209 is also pertinent here, as is the pole manipulation of page 236. Nor do I know any way in which Margery can (page 296) blow through the megaphone when her hands are held. We have (page 322) the Victrola, too, behaving in eccentric fashion; but this is severely indicative only when it comes in response to a sitter's request, or in the presence of some other detail that makes inapplicable the suggestion of page 323.

If we cite the flower contacts of the few paragraphs

immediately above, we must cite also those of April 9 (page 169); and on page 237 we have something for which Margery or any other fraudulent operator would need two hands, and hence two confederates. The control surrounding the megaphone display of page 375 also requires that we cite this.

Pages 179, 209, 237 and 375 give incidents observed by me on April 11, under my control at Margery's left, which would require active and sustained confederacy by F. H. for their fraudulent production—for the best part, Margery and F. H. were the only sitters in a position to do what was done, for Ekland is too clumsy, I am confident, to practice the suggestion of page 179. Even a medium's confederate, it should be realized, must possess *some* qualifications; though some critics seem to think the only one he needs is presence at the scene of the crime. The pole manipulation of page 237, I thought would require two hands.

The seance of April 12 I cite in full, from the record on pp. 251 ff., as necessarily in large part valid. And it is particularly pointed, after the brilliant showing of the eleventh, which can be explained away only by giving F. H. major rank as active aid of the medium, to get, the very next night, an even more brilliant performance at which all oblique contributions by both Margery and her husband are ruled out for all save the opening episodes.

April 15 developed (page 169) flower contacts of impressive character. The same adjective may be used as of this date on pages 217 and 219; but not on page 211, since no showing is made against the theory that the writing was prepared in advance. And then we come to the *Scientific American* committee and its consideration of the mediumship.

I think I have said enough to make it plain that the only conceivable escape from granting the validity of a large body of psychic manifestations occurring in Margery's presence in early 1924 lies in the theory of wholesale confederacy by her sitters, or in the claim that a confederate enters from without.

Both theories are of course squarely met by the Paris and London seances; but we should like also to meet them in Lime Street. The former theory is in this mediumship a psychological absurdity but is wholly plausible on physical grounds. The latter one reverses the criticism, being on solid foundations psychologically, but involving us in endless and inadequate explanations of how the intruder could walk all over, in and out of the circle without discovery. But save in the single instances of March 29 against the one theory, and that of April 12 against them both, the seance records do not afford us specific ground for denouncing either hypothesis. There is no preparation of the premises—that is categorical. I have lived in that house enough to know, even without Houdini's verification. So we drive the skeptic to choose between "the man with the axe" and the roomful of accomplices playing tricks on each other. And we assume the duty of finding enough incidents contradictory of both hypotheses to make the skeptic grant that these incidents are too numerous to be laughed off.

I shall from this point refrain from citing any further manifestations which are with any ease susceptible of explanation on either of these grounds. The seances from April 24, on, offer quantities of incidents just as strong as those we have cataloged above; but nothing is to be gained by citing them. We have reduced the impervious skeptic to two choices. Either F. H., the Richardsons, the Browns, Adler, Cross, Caldwell, Laura C, the Stewarts, the Litzelmanns, and perhaps a few others—what is an accomplice or two, more or less?—are *all* in the plot; or else the phenomena are produced, for the large part, by "the man with the axe." Let us proceed to exclude these theories.

The scales, on their very first use on April 24 and 25 (pp. 274 ff.), gave excellent action. If I do not insist upon citing it here, this is solely because of the combined absence of the cage and of any examination of the pans during levitation.

The bell-ringing of April 25 and 26 was extraordinarily useful, since on the first of these dates the apparatus was rung after having been introduced unannounced, while on the second the possibilities of fraud were extremely well covered. There were no weak links at all in the circle; McDougall was in a position to make fraudulent access to the box practically impossible by using his head as a barrier, and in addition to the routine control all around the circle I had Margery's head at a critical moment. Moreover, the bell was rung after the program under which it was to have been presented to Walter was changed, and unexpected features introduced; so that the apparatus was neither in the place nor in the condition originally planned, these plans having been known to Margery. This episode was one of the best-safeguarded bits of telekinesis *in the dark* which we ever got.

The table action of April 26 (page 225) I do not know whether to include here or not. Some readers will probably question my inference that no feet could have done this; and some would question Roback's adequacy to exclude the man with the axe. On the whole, perhaps we will best regard this item as not self-sufficient.

The scales episode of April 27 (page 279) is described with what the thoughtless critic is likely to regard as a damaging admission, in the abandonment of hand control. In point of fact it is not damaging at all. Automatically, nothing done with the scales counts unless observed in red light; and I cite nothing which does not include adequate protection against the practice of fraud under cover of the dark interludes. In this same sense, a considerable number of sittings of early May, held in the presence of *Scientific American* sitters and aimed explicitly at scales phenomena, involved an arrangement of the circle which sought to leave committee sitters free for observation and in positions of best visibility, and which was not the arrangement that would have been used had the same sitters had any intention of checking up on dark

manifestations of the old type. This was again wholly proper, since the only scales manifestations to which we were going to attach importance were those occurring under such conditions that ordinary fraud of hand was impossible. For reasons exhibited on page 280, I cannot then cite the performance of April 27. But the demonstration of May 3, as analyzed on pp. 281-2, leaves no plea of fraud open save the claim that a thread or wire of some sort ran to the scales and was manipulated by Margery or another sitter. May 2 and 4 need hardly be cited separately; they are quite off the same piece.

The scales themselves did not give such a vigorous performance on May 9 (pp. 282 ff.), but they did give action which had to be recognized as dynamic, involving continual application of force; and Carrington and I took all measures necessary to exclude the one hypothesis of fraud left open above. On the tenth (pp. 284 ff.), the action of the pans went up a bit in pitch, in the presence of the same precautions; and these precautions seem to me to render quite innocuous the fact that the celluloid cage was off. Its absence would make it impossible to attest anything happening to the scales in the dark, but this is exactly what we are not going to do, anyhow. The dynamic levitation proceeding in the light while one watches, while one explores the space about the scales, while one removes and replaces pans—that is quite something else.

The presence of so many other persons on the same floor of the house I fear rules out the very surprising table demonstration of May 11 (page 226), so far as present purposes are concerned. Of course, here as elsewhere when I make a similar concession, no thought is involved that fraud of any sort was actually present.

The cabinet destruction of May 14 is citable here. The difference between a locked door, and a sofa blockading the narrow doorway with a stenographer sitting on it and making a complete record of the seance action, is wholly a matter of

scientific superstition—the one is as competent as the other to prevent entrance and exit. The make-up of the circle prevents any suspicion of fraud within the room. I wish Prince would supplement his declaration of ignorance of the surrounding circumstances (page 446) with some definite statement of what he thinks may have happened to the cabinet other than disruption by psychic force. The suggestion of fraud here is absurd.

I find a pledge of page 231 unredeemed, and hasten here to redeem it, though the place of the present paragraph in this chapter might be questioned. Prince states in print that "the possible normal explanation" of everything that took place in his presence was clear to him, with the single exception of the cabinet destruction of the paragraph above. *This* is the "extent and character of his reservations" about the raps for which he asked on May 15. The criticism that he shouldn't have asked for them if not in position to check up on them does not apply; he might have asked for them to check up a theory of fraud present in his mind, or the performance might have disappointed his hopes. But after explicitly asking for them, he surely owes a statement of just why they didn't please him; and his failure to give this is a particularly flagrant example of his habit of conducting committee business in camera.

The cabinet action of May 19 (page 308) looks very definitely forward to that of June 24 (Chapter XXXIX), but does not of course support itself.

If the independent voice demonstration of May 19 (pp. 299 ff.) had not been preceded and followed by numerous other informal displays of what appears to be the same phenomenon, I should be inclined to sympathize with the critic who feels that the observations of this date must be erroneous. As they lie, however, I must insist upon the citation here of the May 19 experiment, and its sequel of June 17 (page 302).

Returning to the scales with the advent of the No. 4

model, we get dynamic levitation on May 24, but Comstock makes here no showing of having excluded the possibility that fraud may have been projected out of the darkness into the light; so I will not list this item. But the demonstration of May 27, as commented upon on page 347, leaves the unreasoning critic with no alibi at all save to condemn the independent records of F. H. and Mrs. Richardson—something which, so far as I am concerned, will not be countenanced.

Lescarbours's exploration of the doorway and of other sources of accident, and the coöperation of several sitters in disposing of the possibility of fraud—all as duly chronicled on page 192—qualify the cold breezes of May 29–June 1 for listing among the definitely established episodes of the mediumship. The fact that the photographer was one of the investigators is the only justification which need be named, after the statement of page 360, for listing, also, Lescarbours's results of June 1 with the camera.

The scales performances of June 5 and 6 (pp. 350–1) must of course be cited here as inescapably valid. On the seventh, if this branch of the mediumship needed additional confirmation, it got it through the presence of the cover. The photographic results of June 8 (pp. 362 ff.) pile Ossa upon Pelion. It is a matter of regret that the background against which the psychic cylinder appears in some of these exposures is so close to the tone of the cylinders themselves, that half-tone reproduction is out of the question, without a degree of retouching which would be highly improper in such a connection; so all seven of these pictures cannot be put before the reader. The originals are open to free examination by any proper critic.

The brilliant performance of June 13 (page 353) must be cited as another inescapable demonstration of validity. Again on the fifteenth (page 354) and twenty-first (page 355), we have further items for the index of genuineness. And these may be recorded with the remark that the ABC sitters were

more faithful than I should have dared hope for, in their examination of the critical space under the scales platform and around the scales assembly.

With the disappearance of scales phenomena, the Victrola stoppage took for a time the center of the stage. I will not here cite specific dates. Rather, I will appeal to the narrative of pp. 327-332, as a whole, to support the thesis that interference with the smooth flow of the music does not arise from fraud or from electrical accident, and is at the command of the operating intelligence of the seance room. That gives it a place in the present catalog of demonstrable items.

The cabinet destruction of July 24 (Chapter XXXIX), although in its general terms an incident of the older category rather than of the newer, occurred while the room was more effectively sealed against invasion than ever before; and quite aside from any question of control, confederacy by those in the room here means nothing. The guilty party would have had to leave his seat entirely and wander about in the dark; and, as the final diagram of this sitting will show, after doing his work, he would have been obliged to come away via the right-hand side of the room—where Comstock blocked his way just about as effectively as did the standing part of the cabinet on the other side. The fact that he would have been unable to tear the wing off with his unaided hands, but would have required tools, is of less importance—anybody pinning his faith on the man with the axe is bound to give him tools!

With all due apology for what some readers will perhaps regard as an amusing attack of ultra-conservatism, I am going to refuse to list any of the psychic lights of Chapter XLIV as demonstrably valid. The reason for this is I think obvious—*there is a great deal about phosphorescence, luminescence, fluorescence, biological light and radio-active reactions that remains for science to formulate before one can judge where the possibility of fraud in psychic lights begins and ends.* I regard unwillingness to commit one's self on the general propo-

sition of fraud versus genuineness as a sign of weakness—I have said so, elsewhere. But in this particular field the weakness is on the part of science rather than of the individual investigator, and is not to be avoided. If we don't know all the possibilities of fraud, nothing is to be gained by dissembling our ignorance. So in my judgment, psychic lights are to be spoken of as certainly genuine only when they carry a degree of motion that makes them so, irrespective of their characteristics as mere lights. And motion on this scale does not occur in Chapter XLIV.

Of the various megaphone incidents of early July, we must grant absoluteness to those of the twelfth, if to none others. It must be realized that confederacy does not enter here, at all. If anybody is to pick up the megaphone, under these conditions, it must be Margery. The theory of page 381, revived later by Houdini, exhausts the possibilities of fraud; and if we exhaust the possibilities of applying this theory and the megaphone continues to manifest, we prove genuineness. We do this on July 12. One is tempted to include the cabinet-tilting episodes of June 29, 30 and July 7 (pp. 386-8) in a similar statement; but in point of fact, only that of the thirtieth, with Comstock in the doorway, excludes the man with the axe. Fortunately, on this date the possibility of foot fraud by Margery was also excluded, so that this episode actually qualifies here.

At least one of the psychic contacts of July 4 (page 182) came under valid conditions; nobody could touch Carrington at the point involved except Margery, and she was under his and Keating's full control. Again, on the ninth, as explained on pp. 182-3, Keating got a touch that must be valid.

The description of the cabinet improvised for July 11, and of the way in which it was destroyed, taken in connection with the fact that this incident (page 390) occurred in Comstock's seance room, make it clear that we have to do here with a provable and proved phenomenon. And I am strongly

minded to make here one exception to my strictures about psychic lights, and to insist that the behavior of the light which figures in the narrative of pp. 371 ff., if not demonstrably genuine, at the very least shifts the burden of proof sharply to the critic's shoulders.

Numerous episodes of the seances of July 23 and 24 must be recognized as valid. The psychic touches (page 184), though a small incident, are inescapable. The cabinet manifestations of July 23, and the accompanying manipulation of the megaphone (pp. 409 ff.) are kept out of the valid category by Houdini's allegations of negligence against himself. But the cabinet action of July 24, on strange premises, behind locked doors, with none of the usual potential confederates present save F. H., and with him and Margery under absolute control, left Houdini himself with no escape other than the charge that I did it. Inasmuch as I didn't do it, it seems fair to rank this episode as the most conclusive that we ever got, *in the dark*. The table levitation of the same date, which Houdini can explain only by claiming that Margery's head was where it wasn't, is a close second.

I leave it to the reader to decide for himself just where inconclusive demonstration merges into conclusive in the bell-box work of Chapter XLVIII, pointing out only that Carrington, who has found no genuine physical mediumship since his examination of Palladino, twenty years ago, made a definite pronouncement of validity on the strength of his experiences set down in this chapter. The action of Chapter LI, remarkable as it is in many instances, I leave entirely to the reader's own judgment, in view of the impossibility of my attesting through personal knowledge, the large majority of the sitters. But that of Chapter LII involves fewer sitters, and sitters for the average better known to me; it includes two very clean-cut experiences of my own; and it proceeds under the most extraordinary conditions of safeguard. That chapter in its entirety may be considered as the climax to which this chapter leads.

I had thought to give a brief résumé of the occurrence of simultaneous phenomena. This I finally conclude to be unnecessary; they are all recorded in the text, and the more startling ones fall in Chapter LI, which I have just this moment excluded from present discussion. So with one more generalization I leave the evidence with the reader.

Orthodox science is inclined to say that always, if any infinitesimal possibility remains of explaining away the phenomena of the seance room, this possibility must be seized. I think orthodox science is not wholly justified in this attitude. It asks us, in effect, to assign to the probability that there is no major discovery ahead of us, a numerical value which satisfies the mathematician's definition of an infinitesimal—a value that shall be less than any other probability that may ever turn up, no matter how small the latter be. A case in point from this mediumship provides a perfect illustration.

A certain gentleman whom I shall not name, but whom you will perhaps be able to identify from my context, had advanced the hypothesis of invasion of the room from without as the "normal" explanation upon which he might best rest his refusal to recognize validity. Certain further physical facts of further sittings created a situation where such an accomplice, to avoid detection, would have had to be a negro dwarf, concealed in the fireplace. Certain further physical facts demanded that regurgitation by Margery be added to the technique of fraud, and that this regurgitation cover a mass of material described as resembling about two pounds of liver. Certain further physical facts required that the material thus regurgitated be molded into anatomical shapes while the location of every hand and foot in the (dark) room was marked by luminous bands. These several hypotheses, I emphasize, were not alternatives; they had all to subsist at the same time. Their combined probability, I submit, is less than the probability that there exists a major type of "field of force" which science has never recognized. Yet the gentleman

of whom I speak unhesitatingly chose the greater improbability and clung to the hypotheses which I have cataloged, in preference to granting that the holy structure of science is not complete as it stands. It isn't as though we were asked to deny something that science is confident it knows; we are simply asked to picture the existence of something that science doesn't know, something that in no wise interferes with existing scientific knowledge. One might as sensibly deny the existence of electricity, because it adds something to the pre-existing knowledge of gravitation.

The moral is obvious. Inevitably, if we pursue psychic research far enough, we come to the point where we must thus weigh probabilities, and ask whether the series of oblique, complicated and extraordinary explanations by which we may *perhaps* dispose of certain phenomena is not more objectionable than the simple, straightforward assumption that we have still something to learn. To my judgment, there is but one answer. I regard the oblique explanations as absolutely ruled out; but if they were not so, I should regard the assumption of a genuine psychic power as far less objectionable than the assumptions to which we are driven when we reject this one.

